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**The Year of Jubilee and Old Testament Ethics:**  
**A Test Case in Methodology**

Brian T. Hoch  
PhD Thesis  
University of Durham  
Department of Theology and Religion  
2010

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## **Abstract**

### **The Year of Jubilee and Old Testament Ethics: A Test Case in Methodology**

**Brian T. Hoch**

This thesis argues that the “ethical triangle” model of C. J. H. Wright’s OT ethics, slightly adjusted, offers a convincing account of the Jubilee, which is here analysed from the perspective of each of the triangle’s vertices: theological, social, and economic. The meaning and paradigmatic value of the Jubilee is assessed before its correlation to the NT is sought.

Wright’s model requires three adjustments. **First**, an OT topic’s essential thematic components need to be analysed by extremely close readings guided by the priority of the theological angle. **Second**, the relevant topic and its components must be traced through the OT to demonstrate how changing contexts affect the said topic’s inclusion into larger biblical-theological themes. **Finally**, each topic must come into conversation with Jesus’ claim of fulfilment, therefore, the last question to ask is how the new covenant, as the ultimate context change, affects the topic.

This methodology was explored with the Year of Jubilee as a test case. A close “triangle” reading determined that the legislation was highly theological with economic expression—the opposite of the stereotype current in modern scholarship. The Jubilee was applicable only to the Israelites in the covenant community who were to provide mutual care for their “brothers.” Correlating the Jubilee to the restorative events of the entry into the land and to the Exodus highlights the Edenic motifs within the legislation and show it to be a cyclical re-creation of the original state, arrived at by the power of a redemptive covenant. These themes, and others, are traced through the OT and into the NT, predominantly focusing upon the Lucan corpus.

## **Introduction**

The use of the OT in pastoral ministry (which is my profession) is fraught with peril. Interpreting the OT among church members is much like discussing parenting; everybody has their own ideas, and if, perchance, they do not, their mother or granny did. I think that it is fair to say that the majority of the Bible questions that church attenders pose to me are questions of what to do with the OT.

In light of my own context, and in the light of many critical works on the OT that simply do not contribute to church life, C.J.H. Wright's work in the discipline of OT ethics is a refreshing read. Wright has written extensively on the topic of OT ethics.<sup>1</sup> He takes quite seriously the notion that the Bible is a book for the church, and he unashamedly confesses the Christian Bible to be the word of God.<sup>2</sup> On top of all that, his scholarly work is thorough, thoughtful, and full of encouragement that the discipline of OT ethics is indeed a worthwhile venture for today.

### **C.J.H. Wright's Ethical Triangle Approach:**

Wright's method for OT ethics begins with the presupposition that OT ethics are built upon (and flow out of) Israel's worldview.<sup>3</sup> Wright understands the three main pillars of that worldview to be: God, the nation of Israel, and Israel's land.<sup>4</sup> He then places these three pillars on the three vertices of a triangle. The angle labelled as the pillar of God he calls 'the theological angle'. The angle labelled with Israel he calls the 'social angle,' and the angle labelled land he calls the 'economic angle.'<sup>5</sup>

The method to uncover the worldview of OT Israel, as it relates to a law or institution, or topic, is the investigation and interplay of these three angles. Wright's

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<sup>1</sup> A complete bibliography is found in C.J.H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2004) pp. 498-499. This book is the compilation of much of his work and will be the main work referenced.

<sup>2</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 454.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

method and his reconstruction of Israel follows the canonical story, but he is willing to listen to any relevant information, from all available sources.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Theological Angle**

The full enterprise of OT ethics is theological: "...ethical issues are at every point related to God."<sup>7</sup> The rationale and motivation for ethical directives are found in the relationship that Israel, or an individual Israelite, had with Yahweh. In that sense, theological is used as an alternative to other possible rationales, such as social, moral, or agricultural.

Israel's ethics were founded upon Yahweh. His character, will, and purpose defined the covenant relationship and meant that Israel's response was to a person. It was Yahweh who chose them, who formed the nation, and who called for a response—and that response was Israel's ethics. Thus, "blind obedience" or "arbitrary

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<sup>6</sup>Wright, *OT Ethics*, pp. 26ff. I have encountered six methodological proposals for OT ethics during this study, including Wright. As the authors listed below have critiqued each other's work, only the reasons their methods do not fit with mine need be given here. W. C. Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), is brimming with good things but is too dependent on the singular idea of law as the will of God and holiness of God. He has been a trustworthy guide, however. C. S. Rodd, *Glimpses of a Strange Land* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), is too negative in his appraisal of the possibility of OT ethics. As a result, his chapters amount to brilliant essays with no provision for understanding the whole. His approach is marked by historical-critical concerns. His rejection of biblical authority is a presuppositional watershed. W. Janzen, *Old Testament Ethics: A Paradigmatic Approach* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994), uses a paradigmatic approach also, but avoids distilling any "basic principles" (p. 27) from his five paradigm types (familial, priestly, royal, wisdom, prophetic). These types are helpful, but it is difficult to fit them back into the larger story. Wright also sees their value in addressing the individual ethics of the OT. Janzen's warning that the 'triangle method' may potentially mute the complexity of individual stories is trenchant and his view of the individual and society is profitable. B. C. Birch, *Let Justice Roll Down*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1991), also holds great profit, especially with his emphasis on the story of Israel for OT ethics (see pp. 53-56). His view on the community's role in producing the canon has led him to a position on biblical authority different than mine, though far less drastic than Rodd. H. Lalleman, *Celebrating the Law? Rethinking Old Testament Ethics* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster Press, 2004) has also followed Wright's method and our positions are in essential agreement.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

rules,” which are terms pejoratively applied especially to OT law, simply do not accurately describe the call and response the theological angle seeks to reveal.<sup>8</sup> Israel was a distinct society that functioned in response to a relationship initiated by Yahweh on the basis of his love and promises to the patriarchs (Deut 7:8).<sup>9</sup>

Wright points out that the theological nature of the discipline comes to us in narrative form.<sup>10</sup> Israel’s ethics come as a response to God’s gracious actions for them *in history*. The study of OT ethics, then, is grounded in the reality of life in ancient Israel. This intertwining of ethics and history presents its own problems, some of which we shall deal with in the next chapter.

Accompanying these revelatory actions of God are the revelatory words of God. These words also call for an ethical response. God’s words, spoken to Israel directly and also mediated to them through its leaders, sages, poets and prophets, are just as much the demand of God for a holy people as his actions for them.

For Wright, the idea of call and response brings up the topic of *imitatio Dei*.<sup>11</sup> Wright defines the term this way:

Israelites would work from what they knew of the character and priorities of

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<sup>8</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 464.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 38.

<sup>10</sup> The pursuit of OT ethics as story-bound material has no novelty. Birch allows his work to be guided by the larger story (see *Narrative*, pp. 75-91) and Janzen acknowledges the meta-narrative and develops story paradigms in *OT Ethics*, p. 11. D. Knight asks a pivotal question: “...even though the laws in the Pentateuch emerged gradually over the course of centuries...what does it mean that these laws became viewed as stemming directly from God at one point in the life of Moses?” (D. Knight, ‘Old Testament Ethics,’ *Christian Century* 99.2 (1982) p. 59). A similar perspective is offered by J. Muilenburg, *The Way of Israel* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1961) p. 46: “Having performed our task as critical historians, we must seek to gain a synoptic view of Israel’s recorded history and to discern the creative forces which went into its final ordering and completion.” Wright’s method has led to criticism that he has produced a concept of ‘Israel’ that is “...an unhistorical construct, an ideal pre-monarchic Israel in which the laws of family were in full working order.” (W. Houston, Review of ‘Wright, Christopher J. H., *Old Testament Ethics*,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29.5 (2005) p. 167).

<sup>11</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 37-42.

their God to what they could assume he would want to be done in any given situation.<sup>12</sup>

Wright acknowledges the difficulties that Rodd has in using this term,<sup>13</sup> but suggests that the imitation of Christ in the NT, who became human, is helpfully similar to the concept in the OT. We are to imitate Christ, even though we cannot imitate all of his actions. It seems a bit incongruent, from a canonical perspective, that such an important response to God's activity in the NT would have been an unacceptable interpretation in the OT.

Barton suggests that there are at least two senses to *imitatio Dei*. One sense is that of the activities of God that are not to be imitated (including the desire to 'be like God' in the Garden).<sup>14</sup> Barton describes the other sense:

...the task of human beings, and especially of Israelites, is to do as God does: to take God's character as the pattern of their character and God's deeds as the model for theirs.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps we may acknowledge the logic of the first sense with some of the criticisms Rodd has of the term while retaining the second sense, recognising that Rodd is too rigid in his criticisms.<sup>16</sup> Wright suggests using the term "reflection of God's character" as an alternative to *imitatio Dei*. In the course of this study of the

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Rodd, *Glimpses*, pp. 65-76, lists at least five reasons why the concept is not helpful: 1) The paucity of concrete examples in the OT; a concept of imitation instead of similarity action should be more prevalent; 2) Many actions of God are not to be imitated, such as his judgment; 3) A life that mirrors God's is not the same as one that imitates him, as imitating involves reproducing an action; 4) The *imitatio Dei* interpretation is a suspiciously modern interpretation; 5) Imitation of God requires a God who has come down to the human level, and that is not the God of the OT. Rodd interacts mainly with E. Davies, 'Walking in God's Ways: The Concept of *Imitatio Dei* in the Old Testament,' in E. Ball (ed.) *In Search of True Wisdom: Essays in Old Testament Interpretation in Honour of Ronald E. Clements*. JSOTS 300. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, pp. 99-115, who sees the value of the term.

<sup>14</sup> J. Barton, 'The Basis of Ethics in the Hebrew Bible,' *Semeia* 66 (1995), p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 40.

Jubilee, it will be suggested that the concept of *imitatio Dei* in the second sense seems to play a role in interpretation.

The theological angle is an indispensable perspective to bring to the text, for it seeks to understand how the covenant relationship of the Israelites with their God effects interpretation.<sup>17</sup>

### **The Social Angle**

The second angle is the social—it is the study of the social structure of Israel, which lies at the heart of Wright’s triangle method:

...Old Testament ethics could never be a matter of timeless and universal principles, but rather were hammered out within the historical and cultural peculiarity of this people, this community, this society, this ‘house of Israel.’<sup>18</sup>

Israel’s faith and theology made them distinct from the surrounding nations. This distinction was inevitable, since the type of god one serves determines the type of society one will have.<sup>19</sup> Wright sees Abraham as the example for Israel of their ethical and missional identity; he was their ancestor, who sought the righteousness and justice of Yahweh. Yahweh’s community was to follow Abraham’s example by seeking to emulate divine values and priorities.<sup>20</sup>

The society of Israel was inseparable from the character of the God who had called them into existence. At least, that was how it was intended.<sup>21</sup> The study of Israel’s social structure goes beyond sociology or history. It is the study of the way God’s revelation was embodied in his people—the society of Israel existed to reveal their God and his plan of redemption.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 46.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 25; See A. H. Baylis, *From Creation to the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996) p. 26.

<sup>20</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 58.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 62.



Therefore, Wright sees Israel as a paradigm which enables the reader to interpret the OT scriptures. Wright says: “They render to us a paradigm, in one single culture and slice of history, of the kinds of social values God looks for in human life generally.”<sup>23</sup> Wright defines paradigm as “...a model or pattern that enables you to explain or critique many different and varying situations by means of a single concept or set of governing principles.”<sup>24</sup>

The mention of principles has raised some criticisms of Wright.<sup>25</sup> The idea of distilled principles worries some who are concerned with an over-dependence on the law for ethics, or that complex social issues are in jeopardy of oversimplification.<sup>26</sup> Janzen suggests that Wright’s method actually requires a layer of middle axioms between the triangle paradigm and the modern appropriation of the paradigm.<sup>27</sup> If so, what, or whose, authority do these middle axioms have?

Wright’s response is, essentially, that principles or conclusions drawn from a text must retain their relationship to that text in order to be significant. Wright speaks to this point:

...we can articulate the principles or objectives we believe to be embodied in some particular law or institution, but we must do so in relation to the total package of what it meant to be Israel, socially, economically, politically, internationally and religiously.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 65.

<sup>24</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 63. Wright’s doctoral thesis, published as *God’s People in God’s Land* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) is a study of the social structure of Israel

<sup>25</sup> Rodd, *Glimpses*, p. 318; Janzen, *OT Ethics*, p. 75.

<sup>26</sup> Recent examples of attempts to locate the role of the OT law in ethics include: D. A. Dorsey, ‘The Law of Moses and the Christian: A Compromise,’ *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34.3 (1991) pp 321-334; E. A. Martens, ‘How is the Christian to Construe Old Testament Law?’ *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 12.2 (2002) pp. 199-216; J. M. Sprinkle, *Biblical Law And Its Relevance: A Christian Understanding and Ethical Application for Today of the Mosaic Regulations* (New York: University Press of America, Inc. 2006) pp. 1-27.

<sup>27</sup> Janzen, *OT Ethics*, p. 63. He was responding to Wright’s early work in *An Eye for an Eye* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1983).

<sup>28</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 71.

He proceeds to say that the use of the paradigm must be accompanied by constant reference to the “hard given reality of the text” before addressing our world.<sup>29</sup> It is the constant reflection on the social structure of Israel that makes the paradigm useful.

### **The Economic Angle**

The third angle of Wright’s method is the economic. Wright notes that the land promised to the patriarchs is the stage on which the drama of Israel is played. “The land, for Israel, was a matter of theological and ethical importance, and any account of Old Testament ethics must take this angle seriously.”<sup>30</sup> Wright categorises the land as a divine gift to the families of Israel, which expressed and proved their covenantal relationship with Yahweh. The gift of land established Israel’s dependence upon Yahweh, while at the same time declaring that he, the giver of the land, was entirely dependable.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, Yahweh retained ownership of the land, as Lev 25:23 asserts. Accordingly, the Israelites must maintain their covenantal relationship in order to retain their covenantal land. Their tenure upon a land given to them and yet, still owned by Yahweh was the ultimate statement of their relationship with their God.<sup>32</sup> Their tenure on the land was also orderly, because their Owner declared that his tenants should have certain property rights.<sup>33</sup> The economic angle is the study of what it means to be a member of Israel living in the Promised Land.

The economic angle is a gauge, with which to measure the other two angles.<sup>34</sup> If Israel is in proper relation to God, both theologically and socially, then they will

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 76.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, pp. 85-86

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p. 88.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 89.

<sup>34</sup> ibid, p. 96.

live long in the land and prosper. The role of the land, then, is that of as a “covenant thermometer,” assessing the state of relationship between Yahweh and his nation.<sup>35</sup>

The interaction of the three angles is what makes Wright’s method effective. It allows one issue or law in the OT to be viewed from three different perspectives, all with the intent of understanding its place in the story of Israel.

The Jubilee is a helpful test case for this method. The complex social relationships of the Jubilee laws (the social angle) have as their focus land, and specifically, land tenure (the economic angle). And, the Jubilee laws were given by God himself on Mt. Sinai (Lev 25:1), as his call for obedience (the theological angle).

In order to understand the Jubilee laws, it is necessary to keep the proper tension between the three angles. In Wright’s ethical triangle, each angle is one end of a continuum with another angle. All of the questions concerning the Jubilee will fall on one of those three continuums. Therefore, any given aspect will be influenced by, and exert influence upon, at least two of the angles. An understanding on one side of the triangle will move the interpretation of the entirety forward. By maintaining the tensions of the triangle, the goal is to break through the surface of what is sometimes a rather mundane view of the Jubilee and perhaps discover more below.

After the first chapter, which deals with issues of approaching scripture and of history, Wright’s method as it pertains to the OT will be investigated in the following three chapters—one chapter for each angle. Chapter five is concerned with how his method functions as a way to connect the OT with the NT.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. pp. 77-82.

**Chapter One:**  
**The Preliminaries for Old Testament Ethics**

The aim of this first chapter is to address some of the prevalent issues surrounding biblical studies, and to do so in a way that properly expresses the presuppositions with which I approach the text. To no small degree, where one starts in biblical studies determines where one will end.

Wright provides the apt metaphor of travel to illustrate the controlling factor of one's perspective of the text. He speaks of 'going back' to the world of Israel by means of the OT. The 'coming back' (to the modern world) is where the evaluative activity of the interpreter takes place:

...the nature of whatever we choose to bring back will to some extent be governed by the eyes with which we explored the biblical world, who we took along as our guide, what we think we saw, what we took of value and what our own contextual priorities are. We did not go as neutral observers and we shall not return as such.<sup>1</sup>

A recent personal anecdote amplifies Wright's metaphor. While travelling with some friends in the Lake District, our party became lost on unfamiliar, winding roads. There were a number of opinions expressed as to our options. However, within minutes of handing the map to the geography major in the car, we were making the final turn into our destination. The significant question for us had nothing to do with passengers' opinions; rather it was a question of who was capable of navigating. Questions, insights, and opinions were all desired from the passengers but it was only the navigator who could refer all the observations back to their proper place on the meta-narrative of the map and get us home.

As this metaphor implies, many of the questions below deal with historical matters, how those matters affect interpretation, and how they condition my approach to the text. Before addressing those issues, however, the text of Lev 25 is presented below, along with a few textual notes.

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 441.

### The Text of Leviticus 25:

1. וידבר יהוה אל־משה בהר סיני לאמר:
2. דבר אל־בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם כי תבאו אל־הארץ אשר אני נתן לכם ושבתה הארץ שבת ליהוה:
3. שש שנים תזרע שדך ושש שנים תזמר כרמך ואספת את־תבואתה:
4. ובשנה השביעת שבת שבתון יהיה לארץ שבת ליהוה שדך לא תזרע וכרמך לא תזמר:
5. את ספיח קצירך לא תקצור ואת־ענבי נזירך לא תבצר שנת שבתון יהיה לארץ:
6. והיתה שבת הארץ לכם לאכלה לך ולעבדך ולאמתך ולשכירך ולתושבך הנרים עמך:
7. ולבהמתך ולחיה אשר בארצך תהיה כל־תבואתה לאכל:
8. וספרת לך שבע שבתות שנים שבע פעמים והיו לך ימי שבע שבתות השנים תשע וארבעים שנה:
9. והעברת שופר תרועה בחדש השבעי בעשור לחדש ביום הכפרים תעבירו שופר בכל־ארצכם:
10. וקדשתם את שנת החמשים שנה וקראתם דרור בארץ לכל־ישיביה יובל הוא תהיה לכם ושבתם איש אל־אחוזתו ואיש אל־משפחתו תשבו:
11. יובל הוא שנת החמשים שנה תהיה לכם לא תזרעו ולא תקצרו את־ספיחיה ולא תבצרו את־נזריה:
12. כי יובל הוא קדש תהיה לכם מן־השדה תאכלו את־תבואתה:
13. בשנת היובל הזאת תשבו איש אל־אחוזתו:
14. וכי־תמכרו ממכר לעמיתך או קנה מיד עמיתך אל־תונו איש את־אחיו:
15. במספר שנים אחר היובל תקנה מאת עמיתך במספר שני־תבואת ימכר־לך:
16. לפי רב השנים תרבה מקנתו ולפי מעט השנים תמעיט מקנתו כי מספר תבואת הוא מכר לך:
17. ולא תונו איש את־עמיתו ויראת מאל־היך כי אני יהוה אל־היכם:

18. ועשיתם את־חקתי ואת־משפטי תשמרו ועשיתם אתם וישבתם  
על־הארץ לבטח:
19. ונתנה הארץ פריה ואכלתם לשבע וישבתם לבטח עליה
20. וכי תאמרו מה־נאכל בשנה השביעת הן לא נזרע ולא נאסף את־תבואתנו:
21. וצויתי את־ברכתי לכם בשנה הששית ועשת את־התבואה לשלש השנים:
22. וזרעתם את השנה השמינית ואכלתם מן־התבואה ישן עד השנה התשיעת  
עד־בוא תבואתה תאכלו ישן:
23. והארץ לא תמכר לצמתת כי־לי הארץ כי־גרים ותושבים אתם עמדי:
24. ובכל ארץ אחזתכם גאלה תתנו לארץ:
25. כי־ימוך אחיק ומכר מאחזתו ובא גאלו הקרב אליו וגאל את ממכר אחיו:
26. ואיש כי לא יהיה־לו גאל והשיגה ידו ומצא כדי גאלתו
27. וחשב את־שני ממכרו וחשיב את־העדף לאיש אשר מכר־לו ושב לאחזתו:
28. ואם לא־מצא ידו די חשיב לו והיה ממכרו ביד הקנה אתו עד  
שנת היובל ויצא ביבל ושב לאחזתו:
29. ואיש כי־ימכר בית־מושב עיר חומה והיתה גאלתו עד־תם שנת  
ממכרו ימים תהיה גאלתו:
30. ואם לא־יגאל עד־מלאות לו שנה תמימה וקם הבית אשר־בעיר  
אשר־לא חמה לצמיתת לקנה אתו לדרתיו לא יצא ביבל:
31. ובתי החצרים אשר אין־להם חמה סביב על־שדה הארץ יחשב  
גאלה תהיה־לו וביבל יצא:
32. וערי הלויים בתי ערי אחזתם גאלת עולם תהיה ללויים:
33. ואשר יגאל מן־הלויים ויצא ממכר־בית ועיר אחזתו ביבל כי בתי ערי  
הלויים הוא אחזתם בתוך בני ישראל:
34. ושדה מגרש עריהם לא ימכר כי־אחזת עולם הוא להם:
35. וכי־ימוך אחיק ומטה ידו עמך והחזקת בו גר ותושב וחי עמך:
36. אל־תקח מאתו נשך ותרבית ויראת מאלהיק וחי אחיק עמך:
37. את־כספך לא־תתן לו בנשך ובמרבית לא־תתן אכלך:
38. אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר־הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים

- לתת לכם את־ארץ כנען להיות לכם לאלהים:
39. וכי־ימוך אחיך עמך ונמכר־לך לא־תעבד בו עבדת עבד:
40. כשכיר כתושב יהיה עמך עד־שנת היבל יעבד עמך
41. ויצא מעמך הוא ובניו עמו ושב אל־משפחתו ואל־אחוזת אבתיו ישוב:
42. כי־עבדי הם אשר־הוצאתי אתם מארץ מצרים לא ימכרו ממכרת עבד:
43. לא־תרדה בו בפרך ויראת מאלהיך:
44. ועבדך ואמתך אשר יהיו־לך מאת הגוים אשר סביבתיכם  
מהם תקנו עבד ואמה:
45. וגם מבני התושבים הגרים עמכם מהם תקנו וממשפחתם אשר  
עמכם אשר הולידו בארצכם והיו לכם לאחזה:
46. והתנחלתם אתם לבניכם אחריכם לרשת אחזה לעלם בהם  
תעבדו ובאחיכם בני־ישראל איש באחיו לא־תרדה בו בפרך:
47. וכי תשיג יד גר ותושב עמך ומך אחיך עמו ונמכר לגר תושב  
עמך או לעקר משפחת גר:
48. אחרי נמכר גאלה תהיה־לו אחד מאחיו יגאלנו:
49. או־דדו או בן־דדו יגאלנו או־משאר בשרו ממשפחתו יגאלנו  
או־השיגה ידו ונגאל:
50. וחשב עם־קנהו משנת המכרו לו עד שנת היבל והיה כסף ממכרו  
במספר שנים כימי שכיר יהיה עמו:
51. אם־עוד רבות בשנים לפיהן ישיב גאלתו מכסף מקנתו:
52. ואם־מעט נשאר בשנים עד־שנת היבל וחשב־לו כפי שניו ישיב את־גאלתו:
53. כשכיר שנה בשנה יהיה עמו לא־ירדנו בפרך לעיניך:
54. ואם־לא יגאל באלה ויצא בשנת היבל הוא ובניו עמו:
55. כי־לי בני־ישראל עבדים עבדי הם אשר־הוצאתי אותם מארץ מצרים  
אני יהוה אל־היכם:



### Some Observations on the Hebrew Text:

D. N. Freedman has observed, "...Leviticus has never been regarded as especially interesting from a text-critical point of view..."<sup>2</sup> and, like most of his observations, this is a good one, especially in terms of Lev 25, which does not contain extensive textual problems.<sup>3</sup> There are, however, a few items worth noting, and some very distinctive vocabulary words. In this paper, I will be using the NRSV, and I have taken the opportunity to note where I take a different view of translation.

- v. 6—Milgrom argues that ולשכירך ולתושבך is a hendiadys,<sup>4</sup> since תושב "is never attested independently," but with גר and שכיר.<sup>5</sup> I find Kleinig more persuasive in noting that the terms are parallel to the preceding male and female slaves, thus making these words refer to two different groups.<sup>6</sup> Hartley notes that this list in vv. 6-7 is in the singular, which is a more difficult reading than the Sam plural. This passage is an important one in the paper.<sup>7</sup>
- v. 10—וּבֶל has been interpreted as 'a ram's horn,' or as 'a return, bringing back of liberty.' וּבֶל has limited use in the OT but an extended discussion is below.<sup>8</sup>
- v.14—דִּי occurs numerous times in Lev 25, but is never translated by the NRSV. I suggest it plays a key role in interpretation.<sup>9</sup>
- vv. 23, 30—the phrase לְעַמְתָּהּ ('in perpetuity, from the root צמח) only occurs here in the OT, in the discussion of land tenure.<sup>10</sup>
- vv. 25, 35, 39, 47—I understand this 'introductory phrase' to provide structure to much of Lev 25.<sup>11</sup> The phrase, בִּיְיָמוֹךְ אַחֲדֶיךָ, contains another rare word,

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<sup>2</sup> D. N. Freedman, 'Variant Readings in the Leviticus Scroll from Qumran Cave 11,' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36 (1974) p. 525.

<sup>3</sup> For a thorough presentation see J. E. Hartley, *Leviticus* (Dallas: Word Books, 1992) pp. 419-422.

<sup>4</sup> J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 2000) p. 2161.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 2221.

<sup>6</sup> J. W. Kleinig, *Leviticus* (St. Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2003) p. 537.

<sup>7</sup> See discussions on pp.187-188 and pp. 214-216.

<sup>8</sup> See pp. 92-110.

<sup>9</sup> See pp.193-195.

<sup>10</sup> See pp.179-180.

מוך ('low, depressed, grow poor'), which only occurs in these four verses and in Lev 27:8. In v. 47, the phrase is altered by the context, though the vocabulary remains. In v. 25, the first word in the MT reads כִּי, whereas the other occurrences have a ו before the כִּי, Readings from the Samaritan Pentateuch, the LXX, and the Syriac posit a vav in front of the כִּי, thus making the reading וְכִי. The vav may have simply 'fallen out' of the MT,<sup>12</sup> but it is more likely missing as a result of the phrase's function in the chapter.

v. 30—here Lev 25 has a very difficult reading. The MT, אֲשֶׁר־בְּעִיר אֲשֶׁר־לֹא חֲמָה, (which makes little sense) reads, אֲשֶׁר־לֹו, in the Sam and versions, while BHS suggests, אֲשֶׁר־לֶה, apparently in order to match the gender of עִיר.<sup>13</sup>

vv. 43, 46—another rare word in Lev 25, פָּרֹךְ ('ruthlessly') only occurs here in the discussion of slavery, in Exod 1:14 and Eze 34.<sup>14</sup>

### **Explanation of My Approach to Scripture:**

The aim of this section is to explain the way scripture is approached in this paper, which is concerned with developing a methodology for OT ethics. That purpose makes a discussion about presuppositions and scripture necessary. The section will begin with a discussion of the overarching categories of canon and biblical theology before moving to the categories of typology and intertextuality. These topics are all related to each other and are dependent upon each other in my interpretive approach to scripture.

Alexander has written a winsome summary of scripture that serves as a starting point:

Although the process by which this anthology was created remains something of a mystery, having been assembled in stages over a long period of time, it is widely recognized as producing a very significant meta-story. Although its diversity of authorship and genre give ammunition to those who wish to

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<sup>11</sup> See pp.171-172.

<sup>12</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 420.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, p. 421.

<sup>14</sup> See pp.181.

dismantle the story into contradictory parts, there is more to unite than divide. The anthology itself, which abounds in intertextual references, provides most of the literary context within which its contents may be understood. There is not a book within the whole collection that can be interpreted satisfactorily in isolation from the rest. Each book contributes something special to the meta-story and, in turn, the meta-story offers a framework within which each book may best be interpreted. In this regard, the long-standing principle of interpreting Scripture by Scripture makes considerable practical sense.<sup>15</sup>

Within this quote, Alexander has touched upon, or at least hinted at, the four topics we will consider. He mentions the long process of creating the anthology (**canon**) and the dismantling of the meta-story (**biblical theology**). Alexander mentions both categories in relation to the historical critical method's impact upon them. He also mentions the comparison of scripture to scripture, which is how **typology** is done, and lastly, he mentions **intertextuality**.

The historical critical method is also a topic waiting to be addressed and so we shall—but in the proper order. After describing the approach to scripture, source criticism will be addressed, and the suggestion will be made (as many others have made) that the question we should ask is not *if* the historical critical method should have a place in the interpretive endeavour but, rather, *what place* it should occupy in that endeavour.

### **Canon: The Tension Between History and Faith:**

For the Christian, there are, at a minimum, two different authors for any given part of the Bible. There is a human author, though redactor(s), editor(s), or “school” may fit some portions better, and there is a divine author—assuming the Christian holds to some form of the doctrine of inspiration.

That simple fact produces a great deal of tension in the theological disciplines, especially those given to studying the Bible. Which should the exegete favour, the

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<sup>15</sup> T. D. Alexander, *From Eden to the New Jerusalem* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008) p.10.

human author, who can be subjected to historical investigation? Or should he favour the divine, whose words are appropriated “by faith” and therefore are not open to objective verification?

This tension between history and faith flows throughout the entirety of biblical inquiry, seeping into every method, question and investigation. This question of the relation of history and faith was taken to such an extreme that the scholar’s method became incompatible with the minister’s pulpit. Into that tension, Childs proposed that the Bible be read from a canonical perspective.<sup>16</sup> In a review of Childs’ book *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, Kittel wrote:

The concern of the canonical approach is to find a way to exegete biblical texts that will allow the historical-critical method to be used correctly and that will also take full account of the affirmation of scripture as authoritative for the community of faith.<sup>17</sup>

It was widely recognised that a balance was needed between the historical critical method and the faith community. The historical critical method had to be put into its proper place.<sup>18</sup> Given its claim to objectivity and its predominance in biblical studies (this was the case at the time of Childs’ proposal), the question was *how* to properly place the method?

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<sup>16</sup> T. J. Keegan, *Interpreting The Bible* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985) p. 135; G. M. Landes, ‘The Canonical Approach To Introducing the Old Testament,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16 (1980) p. 32; J. Barr, ‘Childs’ Introduction To the Old Testament as Scripture,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16 (1980) p. 12;

<sup>17</sup> B. Kittel, ‘Brevard Child’s Development of the Canonical Approach,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16 (1980) p. 7.

<sup>18</sup> M. C. Callaway, ‘Canonical Criticism,’ in S. L. McKenzie and S.R. Haynes (eds.) *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999) p. 143; H. Cazalles, ‘The Canonical Approach to Torah and Prophets,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16 (1980) p. 29; Barr, *Introduction*, pp. 14-15; Landes, *Approach*, p. 33; J. Blenkinsopp, ‘A New Kind of Introduction: Professor Childs’ Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16 (1980) p. 24.

### **The Solution: Canon and the Final Form:**

Childs' suggestion to the impasse was to approach the text with a new perspective—a canonical perspective. Concerning this perspective, Provan writes:

The leading idea is this: that the concept of canon, pushed to one side in the Enlightenment in the name of academic and religious freedom, must be brought back to the centre of the agenda in OT studies.<sup>19</sup>

For Childs, the canon was “the deposit of the religious communities sacred tradition”<sup>20</sup> and, ultimately, he believed canon should be the object of reflection for the exegete.<sup>21</sup> The canonical perspective was concerned with the processes that formed the canon. Those processes include the adaptations to the tradition that was on its way to becoming authoritative as well as the influence of those who decided the canon. Childs argued that the entire canon should be the context in which to interpret a passage.<sup>22</sup> In directing attention to the final form of the canon, Childs redirected the authority of the text away from a reconstructed text offered by source criticism and placed that authority on the canon where he thought it belongs.<sup>23</sup>

While Childs' work certainly opened the doors wide for helpful questioning of method and presuppositions, it is more difficult to assess exactly how he relieved the tension between the historical critical method and the faith community. His fine commentary on Exodus is an example; Childs uses the historical critical method to find the original meaning, often using critical dating and assumptions.<sup>24</sup> His continued

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<sup>19</sup> I. Provan, ‘Canons to the Left of Him: Brevard Childs, his Critics, and the Future of Old Testament Theology,’ *Scottish Journal of Theology* 50 (1997) p. 3

<sup>20</sup> B. S. Childs, ‘Response to Reviewers of Introduction to the OT as Scripture,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 16 (1980) p. 56.

<sup>21</sup> B. S. Childs, *Old Testament Theology in a Canonical Context* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) p. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Callaway, *Canonical*, p. 147.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 143

<sup>24</sup> B. S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Louisville: Westminster Press, 1974).

dependence on a method that he aggressively attacked is widely acknowledged.<sup>25</sup> As helpful as Childs' canonical perspective is, he left more uncertain the mechanics of how to relieve the tension between reading the Bible according to the critical method and reading it along the lines of Alexander's meta-story.

Childs' canonical perspective appears to place a great deal of importance on the "moment of stabilisation,"<sup>26</sup> which is that time when the text took its final form within the canon. Not enough is known about that "moment," to bear such weight. Ideas about the canon and the dating involved in the canonising process can make a very big difference.<sup>27</sup>

Childs consistently attempts to push back against that criticism (which nonetheless has remained through the decades<sup>28</sup>) by insisting, once again, that his focus is on the entire process of canonisation and not just the event late in antiquity when the OT canon was stabilised.<sup>29</sup>

Childs work redefined biblical studies, and his brilliance permitted new questions to be asked and new perspectives to be taken. His method created a whole host of questions about what the faith community is to do with the text once it reached the status of canon. Childs made a sound suggestion that the hermeneutics we employ should be an extension of those that we find in Scripture.<sup>30</sup> His commentary on Exodus began to flesh out that idea by examining the text in a sort of 'layer' format, by which I mean the different contexts and approaches that have been used on the text of scripture through the years. For example, he examined the OT context separate

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<sup>25</sup> Landes, *Approach*, p. 35; Barr, *Introduction*, p.15; Provan, *Canons*, p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Keegan, *Interpreting*, p. 136.

<sup>27</sup> R. Rendtorff, *The Canonical Hebrew Bible: A Theology of the Old Testament* (Leiderdorp: Deo Publishing, 2005) p. 719.

<sup>28</sup> This was Barr's criticism just after Childs' *Introduction* appeared and is also discussed in Callaway some 19 years later.

<sup>29</sup> Childs, *Response*, p. 54; idem, *OT Theology*, p. 11.

<sup>30</sup> Keegan, *Interpreting*, p.140; Callaway, *Canonical*, p. 147.

from the NT context and those were separate from the history of exegesis, and so on.<sup>31</sup> We will return to that idea below.

### **The Final Form of the Text:**

In order to utilise Childs' approach, I think it is necessary to further explore the idea of the "final form." Rendtorff defines the final form as the canonical text as we have it, as opposed to a text reconstructed by source criticism.<sup>32</sup>

The definition of final form, however, should also address the issue of the tension between history and faith. Bruggemann suggests that the canon also functions as a boundary; it is the canon that sets the borders within which one does theological reflection and interpretation.<sup>33</sup> This idea supports the notion that the historical critical method should not be ruled out of bounds but, instead, should function within bounds.

As Childs began to show, the Bible (by which I mean the Christian Bible) is, by its very nature, a book with multiple layers of meaning.<sup>34</sup> The initial layer of meaning comes from the situation surrounding the human authorship, however that may have worked out. McConville points out that this important layer looks for the author's intention because we are taking the text seriously as a communicative act.<sup>35</sup>

A second layer of meaning comes from Childs' helpful insight. How the tradition was adapted on its way to authoritative status is very important. When an early text was quoted by a later author (an issue complicated by various dating methods!) the meaning of the initial text is resignified and changes in the new

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<sup>31</sup> Childs, *Exodus*.

<sup>32</sup> Rendtorff, *Theology*, p. 719

<sup>33</sup> W. Bruggemann, *Reverberations of Faith* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) p. 27

<sup>34</sup> D. Moo, 'The Problem of Sensus Plenior,' in D. A. Carson and J. D. Woodbridge (eds.) *Hermeneutics, Authority and Canon* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986) p. 199.

<sup>35</sup> J. G. McConville and S. N. Williams, *Joshua* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2010) p. 9.

context, or is, at least, nuanced from its original context.<sup>36</sup> This progress of intertextual meaning within the OT canon can be significant. Sailhamer claims that, in terms of the messianic vision, the later stages of the OT treat the earlier stages “much like the NT treats the OT.”<sup>37</sup> How the OT texts were used and adapted within the OT is the second level of meaning.

There is a third level of meaning that the Christian interpreter must address—the meaning of the divine author. This is addressed by the faith community together, in concert seeking what the text means for the church today. This cannot be done sloppily, or even worse, self-servingly, rather, as Moberly encourages, “in a healthy two-way interaction between text and community:”

The community seeks to develop its own life and to understand its text better through exploring the text’s various possible implications and developments, and there is constant discussion as to whether particular developments are, or are not, good and valid in relation to the original text.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, Childs’ approach of examining the text by categories has been adapted and applied in these three levels. We will examine these levels more fully below.

Vanhoozer comments on the final form of the text:

The canonical approach is a matter not of how the church reads the Bible but of what the Bible *is*. To read the Bible as unified Scripture is not just one interpretive interest among others, but the interpretive strategy that best corresponds to the nature of the text itself, given its divine inspiration.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Keegan, *Interpreting*, pp. 142-3.

<sup>37</sup> J. Sailhamer, ‘The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible,’ *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44.1 (2001) p. 22; R. W. L. Moberly, ‘Theology of the Old Testament,’ in D. W. Baker and B. T. Arnold (eds.) *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999) p. 461.

<sup>38</sup> R. W. L. Moberly, *The Bible, Theology and Faith: A Study of Abraham and Jesus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> K. J. Vanhoozer, ‘Exegesis and Hermeneutics,’ in T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (eds.) *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) p. 61.



In summary, then, I understand the final form of the canon to be the inspired boundary, source, and coordinator for my exegesis and interpretation. The way that I perceive the canon to actually perform those functions is through biblical theology, to which we now turn.

### **Biblical Theology: Bridge and Organising Principle:**

“Biblical theology is, in effect, the study of the unity of the message of the Bible.”<sup>40</sup> Thus, biblical theology finds its categories and interests specifically within the Bible and seeks to understand that data within the unity of the entire canon. Biblical theology, then, provides an organising principle by which to understand the overarching entity that is the Christian canon.

Biblical theology also functions as a bridge between biblical studies and dogmatics,<sup>41</sup> as Vanhoozer says, “...between theologically impoverished historical criticism on the one hand and an ecclesially motivated reading of the Christian Scripture on the other.”<sup>42</sup>

The curse of being a bridge is that it must remain in the middle, committed to neither side. Biblical theology began to adopt dogmatic methodology when the search for a “centre” of OT theology was in effect.<sup>43</sup> The phenomenon of multiple suggestions of one central theme by which all other OT data could be organised is well known, and widely considered a failure. As Barr points out, theologies organised around one central theme that is declared to be the organising principle of OT

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<sup>40</sup> G. Goldsworthy, *According to Plan* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1991) p. 20

<sup>41</sup> R. N. Soulen and R. K. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> Vanhoozer, *Exegesis*, p. 53

<sup>43</sup> G. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991) p. 144; Callaway, *Canonical*, p. 143.

theology will, of necessity, be artificial constructions.<sup>44</sup> Barr is content with that because he correctly understands the value of those theologies. However, we must, he insists, recognise them as artificial constructions.<sup>45</sup>

More recently, attempts have been made to organise biblical theology by *themes* instead of one theme.<sup>46</sup> These multi-thematic attempts contain more of the diversity and organic character of scripture, and they are of great value. However, the same danger exists for them as for the “centre” theologies, which is that the organising nature of thematic study tends to overshadow the complexity of the biblical text. This problem was evidenced in Möller’s assessment of Scobie’s recent offering of biblical theology.<sup>47</sup> Thus, unless one is content with Barr and Gnuse to have multiple, artificial thematic theologies to draw from, another organising principle is necessary.<sup>48</sup>

Because the most expansive level of meaning is the community of faith interacting with the whole canon, I think that a biblical theology should be of the whole Bible.<sup>49</sup> As Goldsworthy writes:

Biblical theology is a means of looking at one particular event in relation to the total picture. This total picture includes us where we are right now, between the ascension of Jesus and his return at the end of the age.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> R. Gnuse, ‘An Extended Book Review: The Critic of Biblical Theologians: A Review of James Barr’s *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective*,’ *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 31 (2001) p. 47.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> S. J. Hafemann and P. R. House (eds.) *Central Themes in Biblical Theology: Mapping Unity in Diversity* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007); K. Möller, ‘The Nature and Genre of Biblical Theology: Some Reflections in the Light of Charles H. H. Scobie’s ‘Prolegomena to a Biblical Theology,’ in C. Bartholomew, et al. *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004) pp. 41-64.

<sup>47</sup> Möller, *Scobie*, pp. 53-4.

<sup>48</sup> Gnuse, *Extended*, p. 47.

<sup>49</sup> D. J. Treier, ‘Biblical Theology and/or Theological Interpretation of Scripture?’ *Scottish Journal of Theology* 61 (2008) pp.17-18.

<sup>50</sup> Goldsworthy, *According*, p. 21.

While I would concur with those, like Seitz, who argue that an OT theology can be written, I would argue so on the basis that the OT is expectant and promissory by nature. The OT was complete before the fulfilment by Christ occurred and so the OT can be examined as an entity on its own. I would suggest, though, that such a theology would be incomplete. Ideally, biblical theology should be done “reading the Old in light of the New and the New in light of the Old.”<sup>51</sup>

The organising principle that I think best maintains the diversity and organic nature of Scripture and yet provides the necessary organisation for reflection and direction for exegesis is that of *story*, or as Alexander presented it, the “meta-story,” or “meta-narrative.”<sup>52</sup> Effectively, his quote above is an argument for using “story” as the organising principle for reading the anthology of the Bible. Many of the objections to using ‘story’ in this way have been ably addressed by Bartholomew and Goheen in their essay on the matter and the essential aspects of their arguments are summarised briefly below:

1) Story does not diminish genre and ‘voices’ in scripture. The purpose of a narrative context is not to force an artificial unity upon anything in scripture, but rather to allow a passage to speak into the story and to contribute its voice from its own place in the meta-narrative.<sup>53</sup>

2) Story does not diminish the importance of dogmatic issues, especially those about Jesus Christ. This was Childs’ concern, but by maintaining the third level of

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<sup>51</sup> C. Seitz, *Word Without End* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998) p. 105.

<sup>52</sup> Alexander, *Eden*, p. 10; idem, ‘Beyond Borders: the Wider Dimensions of Land,’ in P. Johnston and P. Walker (eds.) *The Land of Promise* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) p. 35.; McConville, *Joshua*, p. 9; Möller, *Scobie*, p. 60.

<sup>53</sup> C. Bartholomew and M. W. Goheen, ‘Story and Biblical Theology,’ in C. Bartholomew, et al. *Out of Egypt: Biblical Theology and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2004) pp.159-161.

meaning (the divine reality in the text), the story cannot become merely a literary work, a secular tale from out of the ancient world.<sup>54</sup>

3) Story does not undermine the importance of history for the Bible. For Barr, story (which he approves of) can easily become literary—non-historical.<sup>55</sup> This is a concern, but as Bartholomew and Goheen argue: “if the biblical story is true, then it requires ‘a reality that corresponds to it.’” The story must be concerned with history; otherwise the truth claims of God acting in history are suspect. But, again, the task of the critical method is not to overshadow the story.<sup>56</sup>

**In summary**, my approach to scripture, then, is to attempt to read the canon through the lens of biblical theology’s meta-narrative. To do this, I follow the above three-tier approach, which has been suggested by several other scholars.<sup>57</sup> Vanhoozer describes these tiers as “expanding interpretive frameworks.”<sup>58</sup>

The first tier is the *textual context*. This is the level of authorial intent and the historical situation. It is also the level for grammatical exegesis and extra-biblical documents. Rendtorff suggests that this level should determine the original place and witness of the passage within the story of Israel.<sup>59</sup>

The second tier is the *covenant context*. This level concerns itself with the meaning that comes from understanding how the author or the text is treated within the OT itself.<sup>60</sup> Questions about resignification within the OT and the history of Israel

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid, pp. 162-4

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p.162.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, pp. 164-5.

<sup>57</sup> Rendtorff, *Theology*, p. 722. Rendtorff attributes this three-aim approach to Childs. M. Lawrence, *Biblical Theology in the Life of the Church* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2010) p. 62; Vanhoozer, *Exegesis*, p. 62.

<sup>58</sup> Vanhoozer, *Exegesis*, p. 62.

<sup>59</sup> Rendtorff, *Theology*, p. 722.

<sup>60</sup> Vanhoozer, *Exegesis*, p. 62.

are crucial, as are questions of how that intertextuality develops and, perhaps, alters the previous meaning of a text.

The third tier is the *canonical context*, which includes both the NT and the OT. This is the level that takes into account that scripture is divinely superintended and inspired. On this level, we recognise that the major themes of biblical theology come together in the person and ministry of Christ, which provides cohesion to the meta-narrative. Two of these canon-wide themes, redemption and restoration, are the dominant themes of the Jubilee.

The Spirit uses the text in the lives of the faithful community and, thus, the entire canon continues to have relevance for Christians. Primarily, that relevance comes from the entire canon being a witness to Jesus Christ.<sup>61</sup> For that reason, the Bible is “the basis for faith and life” for the community of faith.<sup>62</sup>

These three levels work together organically and not necessarily sequentially. Together, they allow an individual text to be substantially exegeted, explored and located within the meta-narrative of the Bible. However, for these three tiers to work together to produce an organic, organised biblical theology able to interact with the final form, there are two other interpretive elements whose contributions are needed. They are typology and intertextuality.

### **Typology and the Unity of the Meta-narrative:**

There are a number of interpretive methods that can help connect the two Testaments of the Bible into one meta-narrative. Some of these are: promise and fulfilment, salvation history, progressive revelation, and thematic development.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Rendtorff, *Theology*, p. 720.

<sup>63</sup> Möller, *Scobie*, pp. 48-9.

Another method that is quite prevalent in scripture and an effective way to span the Testaments is typology.

Typology is, above all, a way to understand history.<sup>64</sup> It is an effective tool to understand how the historical elements in the Bible relate to the meta-narrative. Baker defines a type and typology this way:

...a *type* is a biblical event, person, or institution which serves as an example or pattern for other events, persons or institutions; *typology* is the study of types and the historical and theological correspondence between them; the *basis* of typology is God's consistent activity in the history of his chosen people.<sup>65</sup>

In effect, typology states that God is in control of history and he designs the people, events, and institutions to correspond to each other.<sup>66</sup> The unity of the meta-narrative comes from a viewpoint of history that understands and accepts the divine role in ordering both history and the canon that describes it.<sup>67</sup>

The reason typology can provide that unity without denying scripture's diversity is that it is Christocentric. Typology ultimately relates to Jesus Christ.<sup>68</sup> Opinions differ as to what exactly that means. On the one hand, Goldsworthy argues that the heart of the NT antitypes is the resurrection.<sup>69</sup> There is considerable leeway in defining types in that statement, but it does place a definite restriction on typology.

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<sup>64</sup> G. P. Hugenerberger, 'Introductory Notes on Typology,' in G. K. Beale (ed.) *The Right Doctrine From the Wrong Texts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994) p. 337.

<sup>65</sup> D. L. Baker, 'Typology and the Christian Use of the Old Testament,' in G. K. Beale (ed.) *The Right Doctrine From the Wrong Texts* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994) pp. 327-8;

<sup>66</sup> Hugenerberger, *Introductory*, p. 333.

<sup>67</sup> S. N. Gundry, 'Typology as a Means of Interpretation: Past and Present,' *Journal of the Evangelical Society* 12.4 (1969) p. 234.

<sup>68</sup> G. Goldsworthy, 'Relationship of Old Testament and New Testament,' in T. D. Alexander and B. S. Rosner (eds.) *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) p. 88.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

On the other hand, von Rad argues that any aspect of the Christ event can have typological significance.<sup>70</sup>

Jesus' words, out of Luke 24:27, "Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures," appear to mean that Jesus himself is the ultimate antitype. However, Baker argues, there are types that concern creation and the kingdom of God, and those are not really Christocentric types.<sup>71</sup> While they may not be types of Jesus specifically, the whole reason that they are types at all is that Jesus brought re-creation and he brought the kingdom of God!

Therefore, the OT, through typology (and the other connecting methods listed above), is a witness to Christ.<sup>72</sup> The NT, as the story of Christ, is the goal of all the shadows and types that are throughout the OT.<sup>73</sup> In that sense, all typology is predictive because it points to some aspect of the person and work of Jesus Christ. At the same time, all typology is reflective for it is only by looking at earlier scripture, from the perspective of the *canonical context*, that the OT historical elements can be seen to be typological. Within the OT, the later prophets spoke typologically and communicated their hope for the future by using analogical or typological language from Israel's past. The consistent activity of God for Israel produced a typical pattern within the OT.<sup>74</sup> This pattern is then repeated again in the NT about Christ.

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<sup>70</sup> G. von Rad, 'Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament,' J. Bright, trans. in C. Westermann (ed.) *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963) p. 37.

<sup>71</sup> Baker, *Typology*, p. 326

<sup>72</sup> W. Eichrodt, 'Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method?' J. Barr, trans. in C. Westermann (ed.) *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1963) p. 230.

<sup>73</sup> Sailhamer, *Messiah*, p. 11; Goldsworthy, *Relationship*, p. 88.

<sup>74</sup> D. McCartney and C. Clayton, *Let the Reader Understand* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002) p. 163.

McCartney and Clayton have two criteria that we can use to identify a type. The **first** is that the type must have a demonstrable organic relationship to redemptive history.<sup>75</sup> It is that relationship that ultimately connects the type to Jesus Christ. **Second**, a type must originate from the message of the text and not from incidental details.<sup>76</sup> This requirement is a safeguard against the multitude of allegories and fanciful types that have been proposed throughout the history of interpretation.<sup>77</sup>

Following this second requirement, I would add one more of my own: a type must be persuasive to Christian interpreters. Since the final form invites Christians to interact with it, and thereby with each other, and since typology is an expression of divine superintendence over the formation of scripture, it seems to me that a type should be clear enough to convince the faithful and responsible interpreter who reads the Bible precisely to hear God's word.

### **Intertextuality:**

The basic building block of my approach to scripture is that of intertextuality, or the "dynamic interrelations" of the biblical texts.<sup>78</sup> This interpretive method is what moves interpretation out of the first tier of the *textual context* and into the upper two levels. For the Christian interpreter specifically, intertextuality is a product of viewing the canon as an inspired source, and as one who also has a place in the meta-narrative. Intertextuality is thereby linked to typology, which also requires a relationship between texts that may well have meaning beyond authorial intent.

Intertextuality is necessary for the second level of meaning, the *covenant context*, to function at all. That context posits that intertextual comparisons took place, often on a conscious level by human authors who wished to resignify earlier

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid, p. 167.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Baker, *Typology*, p. 328.

<sup>78</sup> Soulen, *Handbook*, p. 87



texts. Intertextuality, simply put, opens up the possibility of detecting correspondences that the divine author may have placed in his meta-narrative as it unfolded under his supervision. My commitment to the divine superintendence over the canon is the first, and most significant constraint to intertextual interpretation.<sup>79</sup>

Intertextuality, as T.S. Eliot addressed it, posits that the language, symbols, and metaphors of one text can be extended and renewed by its relationship to another text.<sup>80</sup> Meaning, then, is a far different question than simply the intent of the author.

Tull suggests that just as a child learns language by associating words with other words and gestures, so texts are understood by their association with other texts.<sup>81</sup> In theory, there are no limits to intertextuality, not even that the texts be in writing.<sup>82</sup> All the world is an intertext, which results in what Beal calls a “surplus of meaning.”<sup>83</sup> The meaning may come by direct, detectable referencing or by a more tangential allusion, or even an “untraceable intelligibility.”<sup>84</sup>

The task, as Beal states, is to decide how to constrain all these potential intertextual meanings: who or what decides what is a valid intertext? Beal calls this activity “controlling the means of production.”<sup>85</sup> Essentially, this section on approaching the text has been my explanation on how I attempt to control the means of production of texts and intertexts. At the risk of redundancy, let me summarise my approach:

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<sup>79</sup> T. K. Beal, ‘Ideology and Intertextuality: Surplus of Meaning and Controlling the Means of Production,’ in D. N. Fewell (ed.) *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1992) p. 28 suggests that there must be some constraint on what is considered an intertext.

<sup>80</sup> Soulen, *Handbook*, p. 87.

<sup>81</sup> P. K. Tull, ‘Rhetorical Criticism and Intertextuality,’ in S. L. McKenzie and S.R. Haynes (eds.) *To Each Its Own Meaning: An Introduction to Biblical Criticisms and Their Application* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999) p. 164.

<sup>82</sup> Beal, *Ideology*, p. 28.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Tull, *Rhetorical*, p.165.

<sup>85</sup> Beal, *Ideology*, p. 31.

- The final form of the canon is both the boundary and object of theological inquiry.
- We understand the canon as a divinely superintended meta-narrative.
- By using a three-tiered approach of “expanding interpretive frameworks, any given text can be exegeted and also located within the meta-narrative.
- Typology is a very effective tool for connecting the two main parts of the meta-narrative.
- Intertextuality explores how texts within the canon relate to each other and interpret each other in their basic role of helping us understand (and insert ourselves into) the meta-narrative.

Noble has noted that at the intersection of typology and intertextuality stands the type-scene, as described by Alter. The type-scene is aptly named; it is a scene (in the sense of a play) that is typical and may be repeated at various points in the Bible.<sup>86</sup>

Alter argues that for the ancients, these were stories of convention, each one having a certain form with certain motifs included in it. When in the course of a narrative the juncture arrived where that typical story was expected, the writer would employ the convention but, by adding significant adaptations, he would to ensure the story’s independence, and fit it to its immediate context. A type-scene, Alter contends, is not for the mundane details of life but, rather, is used for the critical points in a hero’s narrative. A type-scene thereby signals the importance of the moment in the narrative while, at the same time, helping to interpret it by the changes and innovations to the conventional form and its motifs.<sup>87</sup>

Noble notes that type-scenes are intertextual in nature and their full significance can only be seen when they are read alongside, and with, other type-scenes of the same convention.<sup>88</sup> Thus, the type-scenes are obviously typological, and inherently

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<sup>86</sup> P. R. Noble, ‘Esau, Tamar, and Joseph: Criteria for Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions,’ *Vetus Testamentum* 52.2 (2002) p. 232.

<sup>87</sup> R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Basic Books, 1981) pp. 49-52.

<sup>88</sup> Noble, *Allusions*, p. 233

intertextual. Again, they are conventions that occur at significant moments for significant reasons, as Alter says:

The type-scene is not merely a way of formally recognising a particular kind of narrative moment; it is also a means of attaching that moment to a larger pattern of historical and theological meaning.<sup>89</sup>

The type-scene is a significant insight and I will be looking at that concept and how it relates to the Jubilee throughout the paper. And now, let me address how Wright's triangle method, together with this approach to scripture, serves to structure the paper.

### **Roadmap to the Thesis:**

In attempting to use Wright's triangle method of OT ethics with the above approach to scripture, it is immediately evident that not everything can be covered; to investigate each of Wright's three angles with each of the three levels of meaning would make the paper many times over the length it is. Hopefully, the following chapter synopses will be able to present how I have gone about investigating a methodology for OT ethics.

The remainder of this chapter will address certain issues that mainly pertain to the question of history and the Jubilee. The issue of the authority of the OT and the modern interpretation of the Jubilee will also be considered. The majority of this chapter is concerned with matters fitting into the *textual context*—the first level of meaning.

Chapter two, which is a consideration of Wright's theological angle, is mainly conducted from the vantage point of the *covenant context*—the second level of meaning. In that chapter, three elements of the Jubilee are considered in-depth, but they are considered with an eye as to how they fit into the larger context of the OT

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<sup>89</sup> Alter, *Narrative*, p. 60.

story. In chapter two, I suggest that the Jubilee is a type-scene along with the theophany at Sinai and the battle of Jericho.

Chapter three considers Wright's social angle and that chapter is predominantly exegetical. Again, the question of how the data from the *textual context* can be used for further reflection on the next two tiers is always in the forefront. Thus, chapter three will not be content to merely describe the Jubilee, but also to suggest how it may fit into the larger themes of the meta-narrative.

Chapter four, which is Wright's economic angle, is explored almost solely from the vantage point of the *canonical context*. Land tenure, which Wright views as the topic of the economic angle is seen as a type of *God's people living in God's land*,<sup>90</sup> and so the theme of Jubilee land restoration is explored as a type of a return to Eden. At the end of chapter four is a brief summary of the triangle method as it relates to the OT.

Chapter five is again from the *canonical context*. There I will suggest that the anti-type to the elements of the Jubilee is at first Jesus himself, and then, more precisely, his resurrection and bestowal of the Spirit at Pentecost. I will argue that the ethical response of the early church to the great themes of redemption and restoration is parallel to that of the Jubilee legislation, but not technically typological. Then, the story of Ananias and Sapphira is examined for possible jubilar influence, while at the same time arguing that their story is a type-scene that impacts Jubilee ethics.

### **Historical Matters, OT Ethics and the Jubilee:**

It has been mentioned several times in the preceding section that the best way to deal with matters of history and the historical critical method in interpretation is not by a construct of diametrically opposed ideas (history or faith) but, rather, to put the

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<sup>90</sup> This is taken from the title of Wright's book, see n. 24.

different facets of interpretation into the proper order. The following sections on source criticism and historical reconstructions are intended to address just that.

### **Leviticus 25 and Source Criticism**

Source critical work on Leviticus is modest compared to the complexity of other sections of the OT since it only concerns two sources: P, the priestly source (chapters 1-16), and H, the Holiness source (chapters 17-26).<sup>91</sup> Chapter 27 is routinely regarded as a later appendix. The simplicity implied by only two sources is misleading, and there has been significant debate over matters of content, priority and theology.

Not long ago, the Documentary Hypothesis (DH) provided firmer footing for scholars than it has of late.<sup>92</sup> In the last thirty years, the inherent problems of the theory have been acknowledged and the theory in its classic formulation has faltered, probably without hope of restoration.<sup>93</sup> Source work continues, but on unsteady ground. Kugler states concerning P in Leviticus:

Once seemingly the single sure result of Pentateuchal scholarship, P evanesces almost by the day. Its demotion in the minds of many from a source to a redactional layer is well documented; less publicized is the deepening suspicion for some that the so-called Priestly Work results from differing contributions over many generations to a growing and multifaceted body of literature.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 251.

<sup>92</sup> See G. Wenham, 'Pondering the Pentateuch: The Search for a New Paradigm,' in D. W. Baker and B. T. Arnold (eds.) *The Face of Old Testament Studies: A Survey of Contemporary Approaches* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999) p. 116.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. B. T. Arnold, 'Pentateuchal Criticism, History of,' in T.D. Alexander and D. W. Baker (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003) p. 630; M. F. Rooker, *Leviticus* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2000) p. 21-38.

<sup>94</sup> R. A. Kugler, 'Holiness, Purity, the Body, and Society: The Evidence for Theological Conflict in Leviticus,' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 76 (1997) p. 6.

The H source has experienced change at a pace matching P. Classically, it was once thought of as an earlier source (circa 650 BC<sup>95</sup>) that had been absorbed into P in a post-exilic setting.<sup>96</sup> Later, H was perceived to be an “independent legal corpus.”<sup>97</sup> Recent work suggests that H may indeed be a series of contributions, which supplement and build upon each other, similar to how Kugler described P above. Hartley’s survey of the history of the Holiness source argues that H may not have had an independent circulation at all, but was assembled for incorporation into Leviticus.<sup>98</sup>

Recently, a paradigm shift began when Knohl proposed that H (or HS, for the Holiness School, as he calls it) is secondary to P and far more expansive in the Pentateuch than originally thought.<sup>99</sup> Knohl thinks that HS edited P (or PT, for Priestly Torah) and indeed, that HS is actually the final editor of the Pentateuch.<sup>100</sup> This is a groundbreaking thesis, founded upon thorough study, and its wide-ranging implications have created extensive changes to the DH.

Scholars often advise that the results of source-critical work remain open for review.<sup>101</sup> This is sound advice concerning the application of the DH to the Jubilee.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> L. E. Elliott-Binns, ‘Some Problems of the Holiness Code,’ *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 67 (1955) p. 40.

<sup>96</sup> D. N. Freedman, ‘Pentateuch,’ in G.A. Buttrick (ed) *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962) 3:717; J. Milgrom, ‘Leviticus,’ in K. Crim (ed) *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962) p. 543; R. North, *The Biblical Jubilee... After Fifty Years*, *Analecta Biblica* 145 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000) p. 85.

<sup>97</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 259.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> I. Knohl, ‘The Priestly Torah Versus the Holiness School: Sabbath and the Festivals,’ *Hebrew Union College Annual* 58 (1987) pp. 65-117; idem, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995).

<sup>100</sup> Knohl, *Silence*, p. 103.

<sup>101</sup> R. N. Whybray, *The Making of the Pentateuch: A Methodological Study*, *JSOTS* 53 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994) p. 185; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 260; Arnold, *Criticism*, p. 630; D. W. Baker, ‘Source Criticism,’ in T.D. Alexander

On one hand we have the complexity of Elliger, who detects eight different sources in Lev 25 (he assumes a prior H redacted by P).<sup>103</sup> Fager follows him closely, locating five redactors in the chapter.<sup>104</sup>

It is difficult to reconcile these ideas with the theory that Lev 25 came from a P document that incorporated ancient materials and yet was forged in the late exilic time.<sup>105</sup> For example, Fager places the historical motivation of the Jubilee legislation in the late exile but sees the Jubilee laws being redacted in the early exile.<sup>106</sup> While not necessarily contradictory, the ideas surrounding the development of the Jubilee in the exilic period raise the practical question of how so many redactors could be active in such a specific and short period of time.

On the other hand, Knohl declines to suggest how many redactors were involved with Lev 25. Instead, his analysis of Lev 25 for possible sources concludes that Lev 25 is entirely from HS.<sup>107</sup> A consequence of the change in source priority from H to P is that there is a change in the presumed historical setting.

Knohl and Milgrom view the Jubilee laws as originating in the economic growth and unequal wealth distribution of the eighth century. The prophets' voices railed against such oppression and the Jubilee emerged as the priestly contribution to

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and D. W. Baker (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003) p. 804; Elliott-Bins, *Problems*, p. 40.

<sup>102</sup> North, *Biblical Jubilee*, pp. 85-100 North titles his chapter 8 'Source-dissection'.

<sup>103</sup> K. Elliger, *Leviticus: Handbuch zum alten Testament 4* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr<Paul Siebeck> 1966) pp. 335-337.

<sup>104</sup> J. A. Fager, *Land Tenure and the Biblical Jubilee: Uncovering Hebrew Ethics through the Sociology of Knowledge*, JSOTS 155 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) delivers a solid, post-exilic reconstruction of the Jubilee.

<sup>105</sup> Freedman, *Pentateuch*, p. 717.

<sup>106</sup> Fager, *Land Tenure*, pp. 38-52.

<sup>107</sup> Knohl, *Silence*, pp. 121-3.

the prophetic outcry.<sup>108</sup> This reconstruction holds promise but it has inevitably raised some new questions.<sup>109</sup> In terms of the Jubilee, moving the time of provenance back by a minimum of two hundred years requires rethinking a host of attendant historical questions.

In terms of theology, there also appears to be some uncertainty. An important group of interpreters think that P and H share a common foundational perspective.<sup>110</sup> Recently, however, this view has been challenged by Kugler who, while essentially accepting Knohl's ideas, finds the P sections (ch. 1-16) and the H sections (ch. 17-26) to be not merely antithetical,<sup>111</sup> but in active conflict with each other.<sup>112</sup>

However, there is some methodological concern. It has become customary to decide, on the perceived source tendency, which passages belong to H or P *before* beginning the exegetical process. Rooker critiques this method:

...if it was determined that a particular source was characterized by a certain theological slant and then all passages containing this theological stance were attributed to the same source, it would be inevitable that a distinctive language and vocabulary would be the result.<sup>113</sup>

Recent attempts to see Leviticus as a unity within the larger narrative (Exod 19-Num 10) highlight this concern.<sup>114</sup> Smith argues that characteristic themes of H

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<sup>108</sup> J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 2243-5. Cf. E. Neufeld, 'Socio-Economic Background of Yobel and Semitta,' *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 33 (1958) pp. 53-124, who Milgrom credits with blazing the trail.

<sup>109</sup> See R. Rendtorff, 'Two Kinds of P? Some Reflections on the Occasion of the Publishing of Jacob Milgrom's Commentary on Leviticus 1-16,' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 60 (1993) pp. 75-81; Kugler, *Holiness*, p. 6, n.17, p. 27, n.53.

<sup>110</sup> J. Milgrom, 'Priestly ("P") Source,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 5:457; D. Wright, 'Holiness in Leviticus and Beyond,' *Interpretation* 53.4 (1999) p. 351; Knohl, *Silence*, p. 168.

<sup>111</sup> Kugler, *Holiness*, p. 4n. 6.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid, pp. 26-27.

<sup>113</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 30.

<sup>114</sup> C. R. Smith, 'The Literary Structure of Leviticus,' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 70 (1996) pp. 17-32; V. Wagner, 'Zur Existenz des sogenannten Heiligkeitstextes,' *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 86 (1974) 307-



such as: native and sojourner, Sabbath rest, cessation of labour and the festival calendar are ‘anticipated’ in Lev 16.<sup>115</sup> His observations perfectly highlight the problem under discussion because the passages used to demonstrate ‘anticipation’ are removed from their present context in P by source criticism.<sup>116</sup>

Other themes have been observed as providing continuity between P and H. As examples, Wagner takes a position opposing Kugler, advocating a certain continuity in regard to impurity between P and H.<sup>117</sup> Walton pursues the concepts of sacred space and equilibrium throughout the book of Leviticus.<sup>118</sup>

All of these threads suggest that the search for theological continuity between sources is important. The issue, to my mind, is not about the existence of P and H, nor about the quality and usefulness of previous works written with source critical convictions. Rather, the important matter is that there must be a proper priority among the interpretive questions, issues, and methods one brings to the text. Source criticism is a valid enterprise, but one that has been elevated above its rightful place in the exegetical endeavour. When source criticism predetermines the outcome of exegesis, then it has become quite simply, an example of the cart before the horse.

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16; J. H. Walton, ‘Equilibrium and the Sacred Compass: The Structure of Leviticus,’ *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 11.2 (2001) pp. 293-304; E. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch*, BZAW 189 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990); J. H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992) p. 323.

<sup>115</sup> Smith, *Literary*, pp. 23-25.

<sup>116</sup> Knohl, *Silence*, pp. 27-29. An example of how this method relates to the Jubilee is seen in S. Japhet, ‘The Relationship Between the Legal Corpora in the Pentateuch in Light of Manumission Laws,’ in S. Japhet (ed.) *Scripta Hierosolymitana, vol. xxxi: Studies in Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986) p. 76, where Japhet admits that the use of אִשְׂרָאֵל to describe an Israelite is very rare in the P, but is so in Lev 25 due to the “special requirements of this particular section.”

<sup>117</sup> Wagner, *Existenz*, pp. 309-315.

<sup>118</sup> Walton, *Equilibrium*, p. 304, especially.

Wenham, who is active in source critical work,<sup>119</sup> addresses the matter of procedural priority:

Source criticism has mesmerised biblical scholarship for more than a century, yet for the commentator concerned to understand the present Hebrew text emended as textual criticism warrants, source criticism is of more limited value.<sup>120</sup>

Rendtorff expresses similar conviction with a clarity and force befitting a German scholar who, when questioning source criticism, has swift waters to swim against.<sup>121</sup>

He assesses the current situation before discussing his method:

All the methods listed here are diachronic by definition, and their delineation shows to what extent diachronic interest in biblical texts has been absolutely dominant since the emergence of biblical scholarship at the end of the eighteenth century. Robert Alter calls it “excavative scholarship”... The final situation of the text is not a product made by human beings but more or less by “forces of nature”... one cannot trust it and has to go back to earlier stages of the text... I just want to say that my own position is clearly and definitely the opposite from that point of view. I hold that the final form of the text is the one that has to be the first and main object of exegesis.<sup>122</sup>

Therefore, whatever approaches may be used in exegesis, there must be a prioritising force and goal. Wenham correctly identifies this as the “religious message” of the text,<sup>123</sup> which is very much in line with what I have argued above.

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<sup>119</sup> G. Wenham, *Leviticus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979); idem, ‘The Priority of P,’ *Vetus Testamentum* 49.2 (1999) pp. 240-258; idem, ‘The Coherence of the Flood Narrative,’ *Vetus Testamentum* 28.3 (1978) pp. 336-348.

<sup>120</sup> G. Wenham, ‘Contemporary Bible Commentary: The Primacy of Exegesis and the Religious Dimension,’ in D. Assaf (gen. ed.) *Proceedings of the The Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1990) p. 5.

<sup>121</sup> There are several standard works uniformly referred to in the source critical research of Leviticus, but rarely referenced in another context of the interpretive endeavour. A. Cholewinski, *Heiligkeitgesetz und Deuteronomium: Eine Vergleichende Studie*, Analecta Biblica 66 (Rome: E Pontificio Instituto Biblico, 1976); R. Kilian, *Litirarkritische und Formgeschichtliche Untersuchung des Heiligkeitgesetzes*, BBB 19 (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1963), and perhaps to a lesser degree, H. G. Reventlow, *Das Heiligkeitgesetz: Formgeschichtliche untersucht*, WMANT 6 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1961).

<sup>122</sup> R. Rendtorff, ‘How to Approach Leviticus,’ in D. Assaf (gen. ed.) *Proceedings of the the Tenth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1990) pp. 16-17.

<sup>123</sup> Wenham, *Contemporary*, p. 9.

The “religious message” is what the text is communicating to its readers about its subject matter. It is this message that has caused the text to endure, ensuring its preservation by the community of faith across the millennia.

**In conclusion**, source criticism has contributed to Jubilee interpretation in that it has pointed out several features in the text, which require some explanation. These features are often used to posit different sources and the pre-history of the text. I do find it intriguing that the “pre-history” problems identified by source critical work are the very issues upon which my understanding of the Jubilee turns. The value of the source critical enterprise cannot be diminished, but neither can its conclusions be allowed to steer the course of interpretation. The following list presents significant questions that the source critical method has uncovered in the text of Lev 25. Each of these items are examined in the course of the paper:

- The frequent changes in the number and person of address in the chapter (the *Numeruswechsel*).
- The introductory phrase, which is a precise phrase in Lev 25: 25, 35, 39, 47 that contains rare vocabulary words.
- The juxtaposition of the Sabbatical year next to the Jubilee year without any explanation of why they are together.
- The placement of vv. 18-24, which appear to be discussing the Sabbatical year but are placed in the context of the Jubilee year.

### **Historical Reconstructions and the Jubilee**

The historical reconstructions of the Jubilee have been helpful because they highlight the dividing line between what is really known about the Jubilee and what is speculative. Attempts at understanding history help to create a stronger base on the *textual context* level from which to move to further theological reflection. I am not presuming to solve the tensions surrounding historical matters, but to explore how these issues fit into an overall interpretive methodology.

Some of the scholarship on the Jubilee perceives it to be entirely historical—a socio-economic phenomenon given birth by some historical situation in ancient Israel.<sup>124</sup> Consequently, the challenge has been to ascertain how the components of the legislation fit into an overall picture and time frame of ancient Israel.

There is a wide range of opinions within Jubilee scholarship as to how the theological element of the Jubilee relates to its history. Generally speaking, it appears that amongst commentators' interpretations, the theological element of the Jubilee ranges from being a late addition intended only to attribute divine authority to the legislation, to being one of many 'layers' added during the compositional process. Many commentators, of course, take both the theology and the history of the Jubilee quite seriously.

At one end of the range is Gottwald, firmly grounded in a political, materialistic view of ancient Israel.<sup>125</sup> He wonders that all of the data in the OT relating to politics and economics appears in a religious context.<sup>126</sup> His methodology is an explicit attempt to look behind the religious entanglements for the non-religious reality of political ancient Israel.<sup>127</sup> His method indicates that the questions of history extend beyond its relation to theology. There is significant debate going on about the methodology of how to understand and write a history of ancient Israel.<sup>128</sup> Gottwald

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<sup>124</sup> See Wright, *God's People*, pp. 125-6.

<sup>125</sup> N. K. Gottwald, 'The Puzzling Politics of Ancient Israel,' in J. C. Exum and H. G. M. Williamson (eds.) *Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J. A. Clines* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press) pp. 196-204. idem, 'The Biblical Jubilee: In Whose Interest?' in H. Ucko (ed.) *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility?* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997) pp. 33-40.

<sup>126</sup> Gottwald, *Puzzling*, p. 196.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid. p. 197.

<sup>128</sup> See J. Barr, *History and Ideology in the Old Testament: Biblical Studies at the End of the Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) pp. 59-101; I. Provan, V. P. Long, T. Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003); N. P. Lemche, *Israelites in History and Tradition* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998); P. R. Davies,

appears to be more committed than some in his attempt to separate the ‘historical’ from the ‘religious.’

Because the Jubilee includes so many historical components, it is easy to become focused solely upon history. In studying the Jubilee, it is possible (and sometimes necessary) to choose one component, or aspect, of the institution and focus entirely on the secondary literature related to that component. Several of the individual aspects also occur within the other law codes of the Pentateuch.

For example, the legislation forbidding the taking of interest from a destitute brother in Lev 25:36 also appears in Exod 22:24 and in Deut 23:19-20. Any attempt to understand these laws must investigate matters of vocabulary,<sup>129</sup> historical setting,<sup>130</sup> history of composition,<sup>131</sup> literary particulars,<sup>132</sup> and theological and ethical import.<sup>133</sup> Perhaps the most prominent example is the phenomena of slavery and manumission, as they occur in Exod 21:1-11; Deut 15:1-18; and Lev 25: 39-55.<sup>134</sup>

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*Scribes and Schools* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998) pp. 59-64; J. J. Bimson, ‘The Origins of Israel in Canaan: An Examination of Recent Theories,’ *Themelios* 15.1 (1989) pp. 4-15; S. Japhet, ‘Can the Persian Period Bear the Burden? Reflections on the Origins of Biblical History,’ in R. Margolin (ed.) *The Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1999) pp. 35-45.

<sup>129</sup> S. E. Loewenstamm, ‘נשך and מַתְרֵבִית,’ *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969) pp. 78-80.

<sup>130</sup> R. P. Maloney, ‘Usury and Restrictions on Interest-Taking in the Ancient Near East,’ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 36 (1974) pp. 1-20; S. Stein, ‘The Laws on Interest in the Old Testament,’ *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 4.2 (1953) pp. 161-170 (note especially pp. 163-50).

<sup>131</sup> H. Gamoran, ‘The Biblical Laws Against Loans on Interest,’ *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 30 (1971) pp. 132-3.

<sup>132</sup> E. Neufeld, ‘The Prohibitions Against Loans at Interest in Ancient Hebrew Laws,’ *Hebrew Union College Annual* 26 (1955) pp. 394-412.

<sup>133</sup> Rodd, *Glimpses*, pp. 142-157; B. Nelson, *The Idea of Usury* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969).

<sup>134</sup> See G. C. Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, JSOTS 141 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993); A. Schenker, ‘The Biblical Legislation on the Release of Slaves: The Road from Exodus to Leviticus,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 78 (1998) pp. 23-41; H. L. Ellison, ‘The Hebrew Slave: A Study in Early Israelite Society,’ *The Evangelical Quarterly* 45 (1975) pp.

Other components of the Jubilee include: fallow laws<sup>135</sup> (Exod 23: 10-11; Lev 25: 2-7, 11-12), redemption laws (Lev 25: 25-55; Ruth; Jer 32: 6-15), the sudden appearance of the Levites and their walled cities<sup>136</sup> (Lev 25: 32-34), land tenure (the Jubilee contains the principle discussion of it in the OT<sup>137</sup>), the question of whether the Jubilee actually occurred,<sup>138</sup> the nature of law itself, and calendar issues.

All of these topics require hard work to properly interpret them within the *textual context*. The Jubilee is thus a study comprising many fields of historical investigation, each of them necessary to the overall task. However, the other two levels reveal that the Jubilee is, in the first instance, a theological phenomenon that finds its ethical expression in a historical, socio-economic context. Both the ‘parts’ and the ‘sum’ of the Jubilee must be investigated to hear its theological statement.

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30-35; C. Carmichael, ‘The Three Laws on the Release of Slaves (Ex 21,2-11; Dtn 15,12-18; Lev 25,39-46),’ *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 112.4 (2000) pp. 509-25; J. Van Seters, ‘The Law of the Hebrew Slave’ *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 108 (1996) pp. 534-546.

<sup>135</sup> See C. J. H. Wright, ‘What Happened Every Seven Years in Israel? part 1’ *The Evangelical Quarterly* 56.3 (1984) pp. 129-31; R. North, *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee*, Analecta Biblica 4 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1954) pp. 109-21; idem, *Biblical Jubilee*, pp. 21-31; Y. Feliks, ‘Jewish Farmers and the Sabbatical Year,’ in H. Ucko (ed.) *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility?* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997) pp. 165-70.

<sup>136</sup> B. S. Jackson, ‘Justice and Righteousness in the Bible: Rule of Law or Royal Paternalism?’ *Zeitschrift für Altorientalische und Biblische Rechtsgeschichte* 4 (1998) p. 234; M. Weinfeld, *Social Justice in Ancient Israel* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1995) pp. 175-6. M. Haran, ‘Studies in the Account of the Levitical Cities I: Preliminary Considerations,’ *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80.1 (1961) pp. 45-54; idem, ‘Studies in the Account of the Levitical Cities II: Utopia and Historical Reality,’ *Journal of Biblical Literature* 80.2 (1961) pp. 156-165.

<sup>137</sup> Fager, *Land Tenure*, p. 14-15.

<sup>138</sup> Notable summaries of this prolific topic include Hartley, *Leviticus*, pp. 427-30; Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 205; P. A. Barker, ‘Sabbath, Sabbatical Year, Jubilee,’ in T.D. Alexander and D. W. Baker (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003) pp. 702-5. However, see Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2257-2270 for an essay by L. S. Fried and D. N. Freedman displaying the evidence for Jubilee occurrences in the OT.

The Jubilee's main ethical thrust is a form of *imitatio Dei*.<sup>139</sup> It is clear that the writer(s) of Lev 25 did not wish for any reader to understand slavery within Israel apart from its relation to Yahweh and the Exodus (vv. 42, 55). Thus, the text places the vertical relationship with Yahweh, accomplished through redemption, in the position of priority in order to understand the horizontal relationships.

A similar conclusion may be drawn concerning the גֵּר and תוֹשֵׁב. It is widely recognised that Lev 25: 23 plays a pivotal role in the Jubilee legislation. When that verse makes a definitive statement (from Yahweh) כִּי־גֵרִים וְתוֹשְׁבִים אַתֶּם עַמִּי, it seems clear that those social relationships (at least within Lev 25) may be seen in a theological light. The social and historical phenomena of גֵּר and תוֹשֵׁב in Lev 25 must therefore be seen as secondary to the vertical relationship, and reflective of it, as *imitatio Dei* would suggest.<sup>140</sup>

‘Theological’ does not mean warm exposition, though that occupies a valuable place.<sup>141</sup> Rather, ‘theological’ means that the foundational themes and definitions of the Jubilee, both its components and the entirety, are found in their relationship to Yahweh’s meta-narrative. Thus the Jubilee must first be placed into a theological context within Leviticus, and then with the rest of the OT books, and finally, with the entire canon.

At the same time, the importance of history as a significant part of the *textual context* of the Jubilee should not be underestimated. Two important topics of history must be addressed. **First** is the question of legal parallels between the Jubilee and

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<sup>139</sup> See R. L. Hubbard, Jr., ‘The *Goel* in Ancient Israel: Theological Reflections on an Israelite Institution,’ *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (1991) pp. 11-12.

<sup>140</sup> Chapter three argues that the form of the legislation expresses this priority.

<sup>141</sup> Commentators include Bonar, Kellogg, and recently, Demarest.

other Ancient Near Eastern documents. **Second**, it is vital to understand the influential view of the Jubilee as a literary invention of a post-exilic priestly class.

### **The *misharum* and *andurarum* decrees**

Westbrook has helpfully clarified the issue of history and these decrees as they relate to Jubilee interpretation:

Modern commentators, beginning with Julius Wellhausen, have dismissed the Jubilee as the work of an idealistic theoretician, who must have lived during the exile...Several attempts have been made by more recent scholars, however, to demonstrate both the antiquity and the practicability of the institution of the Jubilee. These attempts fall into two categories: those which seek to find working parallels in ancient Near Eastern sources, and those which seek to “make it work,” by reconstructing a suitable social and economic background.<sup>142</sup>

The “modern commentators” see the legislation as a literary invention that had no legal authority. The “recent scholars” are opposed to that view but are forced to admit that while the legislation is ancient, it never shows evidence of being implemented and thus was a dead letter from its very inception.

Central to this issue are the *misharum* and *andurarum* decrees of the Mesopotamian kings (the “working parallels” in Westbrook’s quote). These royal decrees were often made upon the ascent of the king to power, though they may have been declared whenever economically beneficial to a king’s reign.<sup>143</sup> The decrees date

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<sup>142</sup> R. Westbrook, *Property and Family Law*, JSOTS 113 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) pp. 38-9.

<sup>143</sup> Y. Amit, ‘The Jubilee Law-An Attempt at Instituting Social Justice,’ in H. G. Reventlow and Y. Hoffman III (eds.) *Justice and Righteousness: Biblical Themes and Their Influence*, JSOTS 137 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) p. 52; M. L. Cheney, ‘Debt Easement in Israelite History and Tradition,’ in D. Jobling, P. L. Day, G. T. Sheppard (eds.) *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 1991) pp. 130-1; M. Hudson, ‘Proclaim Liberty Throughout the Land: The Economic Roots of the Jubilee,’ *Bible Review* 15 (Feb. 1999) p. 28; N. P. Lemche, ‘*Andurārum* and *Misarum*: Comments on the Problem of Social Edicts and their Application in the Ancient Near East,’ *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 38.1 (1979) p. 14; Westbrook, *Property*, p. 47.



back as far as Enmetena of Lagash, who ruled around 2404 to 2375 B.C.E.<sup>144</sup> The *misharum* were the more general decrees, usually addressing a nation's specific, socio-economic situation.<sup>145</sup> In the ancient Near East, the king was perceived as the source of care for the poor, widows, and orphans.<sup>146</sup> His divinely given duty was not only to provide economic equilibrium, but also to care for the underclass. This duty was acknowledged by various ancient Near East kings in the prologues and epilogues of their law codes.<sup>147</sup>

The *misharum* decrees were clearly intended to address situations of injustice within the socio-economic realm.<sup>148</sup> In fact, Jackson and Weinfeld base much of their work on the etymological and conceptual similarity of *misharum* and מִשְׁפָּט.<sup>149</sup> However, the *misharum* edicts temporarily rectified the concrete situations they addressed: they did not actually repair the faulty societal structures causing the crises.<sup>150</sup> This deficiency made repeated decrees within a king's reign necessary.

The *andurarum* were less general decrees, which enacted a specific state of release.<sup>151</sup> They are seen by modern scholars as being closely related in concept and

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<sup>144</sup> Hudson, *Liberty*, p. 28.

<sup>145</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2167.

<sup>146</sup> F. C. Fensham, 'Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature,' *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* p. 129; N. Lohfink, 'Poverty in the Laws of the Ancient Near East and of the Bible,' *Theological Studies* 52 (1991) p. 37; J. J. Finkelstein, 'The Edict of Ammisaduqa,' in J. B. Pritchard (ed.) *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) p. 526.

<sup>147</sup> Lohfink, *Poverty*, p. 37 makes the remarkable observation that the concern for the underclass never appears in the actual law codes, but is confined to the prologues and epilogues. Cf. W. Houston, 'What's Just About the Jubilee? Ideological and Ethical Reflections on Leviticus 25,' *Studies in Christian Ethics* 14.1 (2001) p. 36.

<sup>148</sup> Lemche, *Andurārum*, p. 18; Cheney, *Debt*, p. 130.

<sup>149</sup> Jackson, *Justice*, pp. 219-20.

<sup>150</sup> Hudson, *Liberty*, p. 31.

<sup>151</sup> Westbrook, *Property*, p. 45.

etymology to the מִשְׁכָּן of the OT.<sup>152</sup> Lemche suggests that originally the *andurarum* had a singular concern (the manumission of slaves or perhaps debt release) but over time the *andurarum* decrees gradually expanded to address socio-economic matters akin to those the *misharum* combated.<sup>153</sup>

Lemche provides a satisfactory explanation as to why old Babylonian *misharum*, which only occurred until roughly the eighth century (though the word is used by Neriglissar of Neo-Babylonia in 559-558<sup>154</sup>), are referred to as functional synonyms of the Assyrian *andurarum* that extend much later.<sup>155</sup> The relationship between the decrees and the Jubilee laws is a watershed point in determining the age of the Jubilee legislation.

Some scholars, as Westbrook noted, have proposed that the ancient Near Eastern parallels contribute evidence that the biblical legislation is earlier than the exile.<sup>156</sup> Their conclusion is due to the influence of historical reconstruction and vocabulary.<sup>157</sup> Lemche disagrees with a pre-exilic position, claiming it is unsound methodology to use earlier dates to establish an interpretation.<sup>158</sup> Westbrook firmly resists any chronological movement of the Jubilee origin back into antiquity where, he claims, there is no reliable evidence.<sup>159</sup>

Other scholars view the similarity between the ancient Near Eastern edicts and the biblical laws as the result of mutual interests and motives that arose out of their

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<sup>152</sup> Weinfeld, *Social*, p. 156; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2167.

<sup>153</sup> Lemche, *Andurārum*, p. 18.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 21.

<sup>156</sup> Neufeld, *Yobel and Semitta*, pp. 53-124; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 2241-45; J. van der Ploeg, 'Studies in Hebrew Law,' *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 13 (1951) p. 169.

<sup>157</sup> J. J. Rabinowitz, 'A Biblical Parallel to a Legal Formula from Ugarit,' *Vetus Testamentum* 8 (1958) p. 95; R. Yaron, 'A Document of Redemption from Ugarit,' *Vetus Testamentum* 10 (1960) pp. 83-90; van den Ploeg, *Studies*, pp. 164-8.

<sup>158</sup> Lemche, *Andurārum*, p. 22.

<sup>159</sup> Westbrook, *Property*, p. 40.

very different historical contexts. Gottwald sees the decrees as addressing social unrest caused by oppressive government and taxation.<sup>160</sup> Cheney proposes that the edicts were used by newly ascended kings to weaken the position of potential rivals.<sup>161</sup> Lemche thinks that the later use of the terms *misharum* and *andurarum* are descriptive of a type of ‘renaissance mentality’ that helped recall the kings of old.<sup>162</sup> Westbrook, acknowledging the similarity of the decrees to the biblical laws, points out that the one major difference between the ANE decrees and the Jubilee is that whereas the decrees were unannounced, the biblical law of Jubilee occurred on a divinely ordained cyclical schedule.<sup>163</sup> The economic power of the ANE decrees derived from their sudden and unknown timing so that steps to minimise their impact could not be taken in advance.<sup>164</sup> Westbrook considers the set timing of the Jubilee to be the academic and theoretical element of the Jubilee.<sup>165</sup>

It seems to me that if the calendar issue is indeed the main difference between the biblical laws and the decrees of the surrounding ancient Near East, we should ask if the set timing has a theological import that makes it important enough to be the main difference.

In contrast to the ANE decrees, it is clear that the entire ethical force of the Jubilee lay precisely in its predictability. Land was ‘sold,’ and its price determined in relationship to the predicted occurrence of the next Jubilee. Food was gathered in preparation for the Jubilee and slaves ‘bought’ and freed in relation to its timing. Its

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<sup>160</sup> Gottwald, *Jubilee*, p. 34; Cf. Westbrook, *Property*, pp. 45-7.

<sup>161</sup> Cheney, *Debt*, p. 131.

<sup>162</sup> Lemche, ‘*Andurārum*’, pp. 14, 22; cf. idem, ‘The Manumission of Slaves-The Fallow Year-The Sabbatical Year-The Jubel Year,’ *Vetus Testamentum* 26 (1976) pp. 56-7.

<sup>163</sup> Westbrook, *Property*, p. 50.

<sup>164</sup> Amit, *Justice*, p. 52.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

very certainty regulated how Israel lived in the interim years. This greatly differs from the ancient Near Eastern decrees.

**In summary**, scholars that Westbrook described as “modern commentators” generally do not regard the decrees as lending credence to the historicity of the biblical laws and those commentators tend to adhere to a post-exilic date for the Jubilee. The “recent scholars” he describes regard the decrees as influential in an early dating of the Jubilee. The dividing line between the two appears to be a view of history and the veracity of the biblical texts as historical documents. For many “modern commentators,” the real history lies behind the texts as we have them, and has to be excavated from its resting place in order to understand those texts.

#### **A Post-Exilic Setting for the Jubilee:**

The tendency of the historical critical method criticism to look “behind” the final form for earlier sources makes the determination of a certain date for those sources, and the historical situation they arose out of, a very difficult venture. As a result, there is a constant effort to locate and, as best as can be done, to recreate the historical situation out of which a text arose. This is a valuable task, but at times it can become speculative, and, as was seen with the ANE decrees, it can often become influenced by presuppositions. To some degree this is unavoidable. As Wright pointed out, what we find when we go “back there” will depend, in great part, on who is our guide. But that is different than using the historical critical method without acknowledging its implicit distrust of the present text.

A difficulty arises when one wishes to interpret the text only in terms of its historical situation. If the interpretation of a passage (in our case, the Jubilee) is based on a historical reconstruction, and the reconstruction is shown to be unsound, it is difficult to know what, if anything, of the interpretation to salvage.

This tension exists with some Jubilee studies. Fager writes about his view of the Jubilee's history at the beginning of his book:

The land reform program of the jubilee is put into the form of Mosaic law for a reason; there is a particular problem addressed by this legislation, and there is a particular solution presented for this problem.<sup>166</sup>

He has, at the onset, cast his lot entirely with his historical reconstruction of that “particular problem.”

In summary form, his reconstruction views the catalyst for the formation of the Jubilee legislation as the Babylonian exile, particularly the crisis of imminent return and re-establishment.<sup>167</sup> In 556 B.C., Nabonidus of Haran assumed the throne of Babylon and apparently neglected the Marduk cult of Babylon. Perhaps as a remedy, Nabonidus instituted a program of religious intolerance, causing the pluralism the exiles had enjoyed to wane. The biblical evidence indicates that the Jewish exiles began to feel persecuted (seen from Deutero-Isaiah<sup>168</sup>), although it is not known exactly why. At that same time, the spectre of Cyrus began to loom over Babylon, producing a potent mix of malcontent and dreams of potential deliverance and, thus, the hope of return was born.

In preparation for a return to Palestine, the priestly caste began to author a legal code, part of which was the Jubilee legislation. The priestly caste was the *intelligentsia*, and they came from among the elite, urbanized exiles.<sup>169</sup> It was their job to interpret the world for society.<sup>170</sup> Concerning their work, Fager writes:

The purpose of P is basically threefold: (1) to preserve the ancient traditions now endangered by the Babylonian conquest, (2) to explain that conquest in

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<sup>166</sup> Fager, *Land Tenure*, p. 14.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

terms of divine punishment, and (3) to provide a foundation for proper living in the future (as is especially seen in the Holiness Code).<sup>171</sup>

These priests understood the power of ancient traditions, and so they incorporated the Exodus and Conquest traditions into the law in order to appropriate the *ethos* of independence that is implicit in those traditions. The old tradition of resistance to corrupt Canaanite values and systems was wed to the ancient practices of land legislation.<sup>172</sup> The result, according to Gnuse, was "...a manifesto for reform which was an assault upon any understanding of society which justified the aggrandizement of wealth in the hands of a few."<sup>173</sup> The motivation for this code was an attempt to provide equal footing and class harmony for the returning exiles.<sup>174</sup>

Fager notes that the priests valued the appearance and weight of antiquity and strove to present the legislation as originating at the foot of Sinai. Moses and Sinai provided a perception of stability and continuity that would make social change and economic upheaval more manageable. Also, the exiles could feel connected to the past since, like the Israelites of old, they were moving to a new home.<sup>175</sup>

The priests who "...collect, reinterpret and reformulate the old traditions"<sup>176</sup> consciously worked for the sake of a community that would need governance upon their return to the land. Their code would provide answers to the tremendous religious and theological crisis occasioned by the exile:

The exile created serious theological problems for Israel because of the events accompanying it—the destruction of the Temple, the end of the Davidic dynasty, the loss of the land, the apparent invalidation of the Sinai covenant,

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> R. Gnuse, 'Jubilee Legislation in Leviticus: Israel's Vision of Social Reform,' *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 15 (1985) pp. 43, 45.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Fager, *Land Tenure*, pp. 55-6.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, p. 53.

the decimation of the priesthood and the end of sacrifice.<sup>177</sup>

The priests also wrote legislation, solved problems, and made decisions to promote their own interests. The effort by scholars to separate the ancient material (such as redemption in walled cities and land redemption) from the post-exilic, idealistic, and utopian elements (proposed by the priests) occupies much of Jubilee investigation. Gnuse explains: “Most scholars believe Jubilee was a utopian vision of exiles who used current concepts to formulate their vision of hope.”<sup>178</sup> This definition, however, is markedly different from Gnuse’s earlier delineation of a “manifesto.” The former definition is historically focused, the latter is “...an ideal projected by exilic theologians which was never practiced in historical form...”<sup>179</sup>

Gottwald’s argument on this matter is similar to Gnuse’s. On the one hand, he describes the Jubilee as a surreptitious program for ascendancy by a priesthood grasping for power. That program was offered to the people as they returned to Judah. Ostensibly, it was an attempt to restore order and possibly even former land holdings:

The jubilee programme can thus be viewed as the political and economic ploy of the Aaronid priests to achieve leadership in restored Judah by dispensing benefits to a wide swath of the populace, presumably with civil and military support from the Persians.<sup>180</sup>

Gottwald’s reasons why the Jubilee was never implemented derive from this setting:

- 1) Exilic return took place over many years and was difficult to implement.
- 2) There is no evidence the Aaronids immediately gained undisputed leadership.
- 3) Land holdings before the exile were unequitable and therefore hard to restore.
- 4) Slow economic recovery of Judah could not provide optimal conditions.
- 5) The Jubilee could not solve jurisdictional disputes over land ownership.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>178</sup> Gnuse, *Jubilee*, p. 46.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Gottwald, *Jubilee*, p. 37.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

On the other hand, Gottwald describes the Jubilee as part of a “broad family of texts...concerned with economic relief.”<sup>182</sup> Israel’s economy was overburdened by taxation and debt which, Gottwald claims, the Bible dresses in moral and religious garb and calls “sin.” The periodic relief valves that served to lessen economic strain, the Bible calls “redemption.”<sup>183</sup> Economically, the Israelites participated in a tributary mode of production, by which Gottwald means a large peasant populace who supported an elite group and their accompanying bureaucracy. The support came by way of taxation.

For Gottwald, “The economic relief laws of the Bible occupy the contested ground between the elites and small producers, whose blood, sweat and tears made monarchies and colonial regimes possible.”<sup>184</sup> When the oppression became too much, the “pressure from below” built up, evidenced by unrest at the peasant level. Alleviation was necessary to avoid political instability and the Mesopotamian *misharum* were designed to address such a scenario. Gottwald credits Moses as the progenitor of the biblical laws, not implying that Moses wrote them but rather, that he is a powerful symbol of economic reform.

Gottwald’s “historical imagination,”<sup>185</sup> as he himself calls it, is certainly valuable and has more than an element of plausibility. For instance, Gottwald’s theory of the tributary mode of production and attendant problems seem tailor-suited to Rehoboam’s bane in 1 Kings 12. And that is just the point: that context is pre-exilic. However, when Gottwald proposes that the Jubilee context is post-exilic, his reconstruction then bears little resemblance to the tributary mode of production. In fact, his fourth reason (above) as to why the Jubilee was not implemented actually

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid, p. 34.

<sup>183</sup> Childs, *OT Theology*, p. 24, addresses the same tendency.

<sup>184</sup> Gottwald, *Jubilee*, p. 34.

<sup>185</sup> Gottwald’s description of his own speculative reconstruction, p. 38.



argues that the economic structures of Israel could not influence post-exilic reconstruction. Like Gnuse, Gottwald has given us two distinct historical pictures without providing the means to connect them. The post-exilic reconstruction, then, has a general form, but many of its details and motivations remain open for debate.

### **Bergsma's Response to the Post-Exilic Reconstruction**

Recently, Bergsma has written an article that engages the debate of history in Jubilee research. He closely examines the case for the very late exilic or post-exilic origin of the legislation.<sup>186</sup> The exact issue he addresses is what he terms the “land reclamation” hypothesis, which is similar to the reconstruction just described:

This view regards the jubilee legislation as the production of exilic or post-exilic priests, with the intent to justify legally the repossession of lands lost in the exile by themselves and other returning Judean exiles.<sup>187</sup>

Bergsma organised his work around a two-fold conclusion: first, that the hypothesis is actually hindered by the provisions of the Jubilee and, second, that the text does not exhibit clues of priestly redactions aimed at justifying land reclamation.

He asserts that it is unclear exactly how the legislation would function in settling disputes between returnees and non-deportees.<sup>188</sup> The text of Lev 25 omits essential information necessary for the implementation of the hypothesis. For example, there is no date supplied to begin the counting of years. Even if one of the exilic returns could be determined as the point of inception, would that event then refer to 25:2 “When you enter the land...?” If so, the returnees would have to wait fifty years to reclaim land. Additionally, if a returnee missed a Jubilee, must he wait another fifty years to reclaim his land?<sup>189</sup> The evidence that can be gathered from

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<sup>186</sup>J. S. Bergsma, ‘The Jubilee: A Post-Exilic Priestly Attempt to Reclaim Lands?’ *Biblica* 84 (2003) pp. 225-246.

<sup>187</sup>p. 225.

<sup>188</sup>p. 228.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid.

post-exilic sources gives no indication that these historical situations ever occurred.<sup>190</sup> Even Ezekiel 45-48 (which contains an exilic provision for land reappropriation closely resembling H) lacks the conflicts of the hypothesis.<sup>191</sup>

Bergsma notes that the focus of the hypothesis is on the elites, who are writing for their own purposes, namely power and land reclamation.<sup>192</sup> This scenario conflicts with an interpretation that understands the true beneficiaries of the Jubilee to be the peasants, or small farmers. Legislation written by elite exiles, which protected those who stayed in Judah, would be self-defeating. If large numbers of the exiles came from the elite, urban population of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24:14), it is difficult to understand why the elites would exclude from reclamation the very urban property they wished to recover.<sup>193</sup> The only urban property permanently open for redemption was that of Levitical cities, a category in which Jerusalem was not included. Bergsma concludes:

In sum, the problem for the “land-reclamation” hypothesis is this: ‘the purpose of the jubilee seems to have been to preserve the economic integrity of the peasant farmer,’ the very segment of the population not exiled. The exiles were the urban elite who benefited from the system of latifundism expressly opposed by the jubilee. How then is the jubilee legislation a product or redaction of the interests of the returning exiles, priestly or lay?<sup>194</sup>

The terminology used in Lev 25, particularly **יִשְׁבִּיָּה**, leads to the conclusion that Jubilee was announced to the remaining peasants but not the returning elites, who had not been **יִשְׁבִּיָּה** for many decades.<sup>195</sup>

Therefore, reading the Jubilee through the interpretive grid of the hypothesis provides no added insight or benefit. In fact, Bergsma claims the overall effect is to

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<sup>190</sup> p. 229.

<sup>191</sup> p. 245.

<sup>192</sup> p. 230.

<sup>193</sup> p. 232.

<sup>194</sup> pp. 233-234.

<sup>195</sup> p. 233.

increase the difficulty of reading Lev 25. If land reclamation is seen as the centre, the extended portion (vv. 23-55) of issues surrounding debt slavery “become irrelevant to the intent of the final redaction.”<sup>196</sup>

**In summary**, Bergsma has raised substantial, intricate, and damaging questions about the post-exilic hypothesis. His article is, in essence, the demand of a skilled exegete that historical reconstructions conform to the text rather than *vice versa*. In large part, the Documentary Hypothesis bears responsibility for the post-exilic view of the Jubilee. If the origin of P (or H) lies in the post-exilic era, then the origin of the Jubilee must also. The works surveyed have illustrated Alter’s point that the “excavative” work of biblical scholarship may not necessarily deliver fruitful interpretation.<sup>197</sup> A problem occurs when the text is first regarded as social commentary upon a specific historical situation that can only be located by historical investigation. Until that setting is found, the text cannot speak with a full voice.

History-focused scholarship is not really a problem, however. The problem is the precedence given to a historical reconstruction, especially if the reconstruction is over against the text. The method of building a reconstruction to match a “particular problem” as Fager described and then presented, is an example of putting all of one’s eggs in one basket. It is difficult to determine what is left of the post-exilic presentation (as described above) once Bergsma is done with it. By conducting all of the exegesis on the one level of the *textual context*, there is no recourse except to posit a different historical reconstruction.

### **Carmichael’s Theory of “Historical Memory”**

The three-tiered approach to meaning can provide a useful way forward regarding the historical situation of the Jubilee, even among those with different

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<sup>196</sup> p. 235.

<sup>197</sup> Alter, *Narrative*, p. 13.

presuppositions for the *textual context*. If the Jubilee is investigated by looking at more than one level, things change.

Carmichael has the same presupposition of a post-exilic setting for the Jubilee legislation as those authors described above, but he has written an article that, in essence, explores the second level of meaning, the *covenant context*.<sup>198</sup> He has explored the meaning of the Jubilee as it relates and is related (intertextually) to other parts of the OT and to the larger story of Israel.

Carmichael pursues a reading of the Jubilee that seeks to detect its roots in the patriarchal story of Joseph.<sup>199</sup> He begins with an honest discussion of the problem of history in Jubilee interpretation. He notes how interpreters have been “confounded” and “bewildered” by the unreality of the laws.<sup>200</sup> He surveys interpretations since 1950, which is the year North’s magisterial work on the Jubilee appeared.<sup>201</sup> Then he examines the responses of scholars to those difficulties. Some interpreters, he says, regard the legislation as utopian, while others attempt to “...explain away the unreal aspects of the law,”<sup>202</sup> a reference to their endeavours to harmonise the laws by modifying or even denying their meaning.

The overall result of that effort, Carmichael claims, is a mishandling of the text. As proof, he offers North’s famous confession that his (North’s) work contradicted the text.<sup>203</sup> Carmichael closes his survey of interpretation with this comment:

In fact, the common tendency among all those commentators is to explain

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<sup>198</sup> *Covenant context* means the entire OT, not the Mosaic covenant as over against, say, the Noahic.

<sup>199</sup> C. Carmichael, ‘The Sabbatical/Jubilee Cycle and the Seven-Year Famine in Egypt,’ *Biblica* 80 (1999) pp. 224-239.

<sup>200</sup> p. 224.

<sup>201</sup> p. 224.

<sup>202</sup> p. 226.

<sup>203</sup> p. 227. See North, *Sociology*, p. 119.

away or even to disregard the impractical or implausible elements of the rules which are, nevertheless, manifestly expressed in the text.<sup>204</sup>

Carmichael then presents an alternative interpretation in an essay comparing the events of the famine in Egypt (during Joseph's time in Gen 47) to the legislation of the Jubilee by drawing attention to the correspondences between the two texts. In this way, he attempts to address what he calls the "strangeness" of the Jubilee by locating it within the "historical memory" of Israel.<sup>205</sup> The following table shows the correspondences in parallel form:

<b>Genesis 47:</b>	<b>Leviticus 25:</b>
7 years of plenty	7 years of plenty in Jubilee cycle (v. 20)
7 years of famine	7 years of fallow in Jubilee cycle (v.20)
Storing up of bumper harvest	Storing up of bumper harvest
All Egypt is property of Pharaoh	All the land belongs to Yahweh (v. 23)
Egyptians become Pharaoh's slaves	Exodus makes Israel Yahweh's slaves
Israelites were enslaved to Pharaoh	Israel now Yahweh's slaves
2 year climactic period	2 year Sabbath/Jubilee period
Egyptians lose property in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year	Israelites 'regain' property in 2 <sup>nd</sup> year
Pharaoh requires payment of one-fifth	Yahweh requires payment of one-fifth
Egyptian priests exempted	Yahweh's priestly tribe exempted
Use of אֲחִיזָה	Use of אֲחִיזָה
Use of גֵּר	Use of גֵּר
Pharaoh ruled with בִּפְרֹךְ	Yahweh prohibits בִּפְרֹךְ
Reconciliation provided by Joseph	Reconciliation provided by Yom Kippur

While the sheer volume of correspondences is stunning, both Noble and Leonard warn us that the mere presence of correspondences or allusions does not necessarily affect meaning. Rather, some sort of demonstrable coherence that helps to interpret the connections is desirable.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>204</sup> p. 227.

<sup>205</sup> p. 227.

<sup>206</sup> Noble, *Allusions*, p. 249; J. M. Leonard, 'Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127.2 (2008) p. 246, suggests that the strongest connections: a) share language, b) that is distinctive, c) there is an accumulation of shared terms, d) the shared terms are in phrases, and e) the shared language occurs in similar contexts.

Carmichael parallels Joseph's provision of reconciliation with that of Yom Kippur's. Reconciliation is foundational for both texts, but, as Carmichael points out, the interplay of reconciliation, Yom Kippur and the Jubilee has remained a puzzle for many critics.<sup>207</sup> The importance of the link between Yom Kippur and the Jubilee is worth investigating, and will be taken up in the next chapter.

Carmichael claims that the Jubilee legislation was written with the explicit intention of recalling the events of Joseph in Egypt:

They laws of Leviticus 25...are literary constructions that incorporate symbolic pointers to historical events. The lawgiver's intent is to give sharper definition to an Israelite's identity by having him recall his nation's experience when living in a foreign land.<sup>208</sup>

While some aspects of his claim that the two passages reveal the lawgiver's intentional correlation may be a bit overreaching (such as the Joseph story solving the issues surrounding the structure of Lev 25-27<sup>209</sup>), the sheer number of correlations he has uncovered should, at least, earn him a hearing.

**In summary**, Carmichael has staunchly detailed the scholarly tendency to allow historical reconstruction to influence and even hinder the reading and interpretation of the Jubilee. That need for reconstruction focuses discussion on questions of historical import and the harmonisation of laws.

Carmichael accepts a post-exilic historical setting for the Jubilee. His conclusion to the article, though, is striking. He postulates that the lawgiver was attempting to solidify national identity among exiles in foreign Babylon.<sup>210</sup>

This conclusion of national identity is quite different than the political and economic conclusions of Fager, Gottwald and Gnuse. By examining the Jubilee on

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<sup>207</sup> p. 234.

<sup>208</sup> p. 237.

<sup>209</sup> p. 235.

<sup>210</sup> p. 237.

the level of the *covenant context*, additional information came to the fore and the meaning was altered, even though the historical presuppositions of all the authors remained the same.

While I might differ with Carmichael's historical presuppositions, I agree completely that a very substantial part of what the Jubilee is all about is tied up in the idea of national identity. Thus, the second level of meaning has brought two people with very different views of history into dialogue. While that may not occur with every passage, with this one it has. When the third level of meaning, the *canonical context*, is considered, the national identity is connected to the overarching themes of the meta-narrative and national identity can then be understood in the intensely theological context in which the Jubilee explains it.<sup>211</sup>

### **The Jubilee of Jubilees**

Paradoxically, I would like to step outside the canonical books for an example of viewing the Jubilee from the third level of meaning, the *canonical context*. The book of *Jubilees* is one of the extra-biblical writings that have a great deal of relevance to the study of the Jubilee.<sup>212</sup> That body of literature would be of great interest on the level of the *textual context*, but for the purposes of this paper, it cannot be reviewed now.

*Jubilees* is an example of a writer considering the Jubilee from the vantage point of the entire meta-narrative of his time and its dominant, overarching themes.

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<sup>211</sup> The issue of national identity and the Jubilee is discussed in chapter three.

<sup>212</sup> O. S. Wintermute, 'Jubilees,' in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.) *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1985) pp. 34-142; R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or The Little Genesis* (New York: The MacMillan Company 1917). Another highly relevant text is 11QMelchizedek, which interprets history according to Jubilee periods, see Wise, M., Abegg Jr. M. G., and Cook, E. *The Dead Sea Scroll* (San Francisco: Harper, 2005) pp. 590-3.

Perhaps, since much of the rest of the paper will explore how the biblical writers also had this consideration, the use of *Jubilees* as an example can be allowed.

The device of “periodisation” is employed in *Jubilees*, which is the dividing of time into distinct periods, in this case, Jubilee periods.<sup>213</sup> The title of the book is descriptive of its contents. The final Jubilee period in the book, while not being the end of time, is definitely the climactic point of history:

And there are still forty further years to learn the commands of the LORD until they cross over the shore of the land of Canaan, crossing over the Jordan to its western side. And jubilees will pass until Israel is purified from all sin of fornication, and defilement, and uncleanness, and sin and error. And they will dwell in confidence in all the land. And then it will not have any Satan or any evil (one). And the land will be purified from that time and forever.<sup>214</sup>

Wiesenberg calls this final, fiftieth Jubilee the “Jubilee of *Jubilees*.” It is the zenith of the book, both because of the device of periodisation, and the fact that the book ends right after it. He argues that the Jubilee of *Jubilees* is:

...a kind of *annus mirabilis*, the year chosen by divine design to be marked by the most momentous event in the national epic of Israel. That event, according to the extant text of the *Book of Jubilees*, is Israel’s entry into the land of Canaan.<sup>215</sup>

Wiesenberg also found another reference to a fiftieth Jubilee in Pseudo-Jonathan.<sup>216</sup>

The emphasis there is on the Exodus and the revelation at Sinai as the climactic events, instead of being on the entry into the land of Canaan.

Recognising how hard the authors of these books worked to align their respective climactic events with the climactic time of the fiftieth Jubilee, Wiesenberg suggests that their efforts created:

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<sup>213</sup> J. C. VanderKam, and P. Flint, *The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls: Their Significance for Understanding the Bible, Judaism, Jesus, and Christianity* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2002) p. 199

<sup>214</sup> Wintemute, *Jubilees*, p. 142

<sup>215</sup> E. Wiesenberg, ‘The Jubilee of *Jubilees*,’ *Revue de Qumran* 3 (1961) p. 17; Cf. J. S. Bergsma, ‘Once Again, The Jubilee, Every 49 or 50 Years?’ *Vetus Testamentum* 55.1 (2005) p. 124.

<sup>216</sup> Wiesenberg, *Jubilee*, p.17.



...a contrivance designed to give the air of plausibility to the preconceived notion that the Jubilee of *Jubilees* was marked by an event of paramount significance.<sup>217</sup>

What is the “event of paramount significance” that justifies so much effort on the part of these writers? According to Wiesenbergs, it is the notion that the climactic event is the entry into the land of promise: the nationalised event of land reception (the divine bestowment of the land-gift) that parallels the individual bestowment upon the Israelite at the Jubilee of Lev 25—it is the theme of restoration.

This national significance is also evident in *Pseudo-Jonathan* with its concern for the Exodus and revelation at Sinai. Those events, Wiesenbergs says, mark the nationalised physical and spiritual deliverance from slavery, which parallels the individual release enacted at the Jubilee—it is the theme of redemption.<sup>218</sup>

Obviously, the two main tenets of the Jubilee legislation have been interpreted in a new way by a new context that attests to their importance to Israel. VanderKam agrees with this conclusion and helpfully concurs that the “Jubilee of *Jubilees*” encompassed all three events (Exodus, Sinai and entry into the land), because all three occurred in the climactic fiftieth jubilee period:

In this way, the people of Israel observe on a national level in this specific fiftieth jubilee unit what Israelites experienced on an individual level in the fiftieth or jubilee year: freedom from slavery and regaining ones hereditary land that had been lost.<sup>219</sup>

The point is this: the two main tenets of the Jubilee, restoration and redemption, have been connected to *Jubilee*’s meta-narrative of Israel. The specific, historical matters of the Jubilee legislation mean something more, even beyond the typological connections we saw with Carmichael’s article. *Jubilees* presents the

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<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> Ibid.

<sup>219</sup> J. C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001) p. 84. He notes the prediction of the removal of the evil one at that time.

Jubilee as an expression of the ultimate plan of Yahweh for his people, for all time.

That, of necessity, will alter how the Jubilee is interpreted, from top to bottom.

These observations do not require an interpreter to hold a certain view of history. Conversation can still be held about these matters apart from the question of history and faith. Whether one regards the conclusions as authoritative is another matter, one which needs to be considered below. Just as I would consider *Jubilees* instructive for interpretation without acknowledging any of its authority, so one committed to a secularist position could discuss the *canonical context* without acknowledging any of its authority.<sup>220</sup>

Hopefully, the three cases we have viewed: the post-exilic construction, Carmichael's theory of historical memory, and the Jubilee of *Jubilees*, have demonstrated how the three-tiered approach may advance the study of the Jubilee. It may be helpful to look briefly now at how the issue of history impacts the discipline of OT ethics.

### **Ancient Israel and OT Ethics**

Wright comments that the modern prerequisite for approaching OT ethics is a rehearsal of hermeneutical difficulties, an activity that "...seems to be an entrance requirement for the guild of aspiring writers on Old Testament ethics."<sup>221</sup> While this assessment is truer than some may care to admit, Wright knows it comes with the territory of establishing a methodology for the discipline.

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<sup>220</sup> For example, P. Davies, 'Ethics and the Old Testament,' in J. W. Rogerson, M. Davies and M. D. Carroll R. (eds.) *The Bible in Ethics*, JSOTS 207 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) p. 173, first states his own "anti-religious approach" and then that "...I do not see how a responsible exegete can pretend a neutral or objective position."

<sup>221</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 442.

OT ethicists are fond of explaining (and Wright is among this group) that not many years ago, a bibliography of OT ethics was virtually nowhere to be found.<sup>222</sup> Happily, the present situation has significantly improved, but the debate concerning method is still ongoing.<sup>223</sup> Kaiser, whose own monograph appeared at the beginning of the modern OT ethics resurgence,<sup>224</sup> comments on this debate:

It is clear that much remains to be done in the area of OT ethics. If anything, the field is either in a state of total disarray or on the brink of total eclipse and collapse because of the pressures of modernity.<sup>225</sup>

Recitation of methodological issues is necessary for the progress of scholarly communication about OT ethics. One of those issues is history, which has so influenced the source-critical approach and scholarly interpretation of the Jubilee. Recent work suggests that history is the major watershed in methodology.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>222</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 14; W. C. Kaiser, Jr., 'New Approaches to Old Testament Ethics,' *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 35.3 (1992) p. 289; J. Barton, 'Understanding Old Testament Ethics,' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 9 (1978) p. 44.

<sup>223</sup> See Wright, *OT Ethics*, pp. 415-440 for a masterful summary of contemporary work. See also M. D. Carroll R., 'An Introduction to the Ethics of John Rogerson,' in J. W. Rogerson and M. D. Carroll R., eds. *Theory and Practice in Old Testament Ethics* (London: T & T Clark, 2004) pp. 1-11.

<sup>224</sup> Kaiser's book, *OT Ethics*, was the first English OT ethics book in roughly half a century.

<sup>225</sup> Kaiser, *Approaches*, p. 296.

<sup>226</sup> Some recent works with an either OT ethics or ethics of the ancient Israelites approach include: R. R. Wilson, 'Approaches to Old Testament Ethics,' in G. M. Tucker, D. L. Petersen, and R. R. Wilson (eds.) *Canon, Theology, and Old Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honour of Brevard S. Childs* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988) pp. 62-74; idem, 'Ethics in Conflict: Sociological Aspects of Ancient Israelite Ethics,' in S. Niditch (ed.) *Text and Tradition: The Hebrew Bible and Folklore* (Atlanta: SBL Publications, 1990) pp. 193-203; idem, 'Sources and Methods in the Study of Ancient Israelite Ethics,' *Semeia* 66 (1995) pp. 55-63; E. W. Davies, 'Ethics of the Hebrew Bible: The Problem of Methodology,' *Semeia* 66 (1995) pp. 43-53; Barton, *Understanding*, pp. 44-64; E. Otto, 'Of Aims and Methods in Hebrew Bible Ethics,' *Semeia* 66 (1995) pp. 161, rejects a canonical approach to ethics: "I believe that if we want to understand a given text we must also understand its history."

In 1978, John Barton wrote an article on OT ethics that is possibly the most influential work in the discipline.<sup>227</sup> Its influence stems from its paradigm shifting questions about the then-standard approach to OT ethics, best exemplified by the works of Hempel and Eichrodt.<sup>228</sup> Barton's target is coherence in OT ethics, which he thinks produces an "artificial construct."<sup>229</sup> He questions the proper subject of inquiry for OT ethics, effectively arguing for a shift in the definition of the field:

What is fatal here, I think, is a confusion about the proper *subject* for propositions about the ethical beliefs held in ancient Israel. We must distinguish three types of assertions about ethics: a) all or most Israelites held that x; b) certain Old Testament authors held that x; c) the Old Testament taken as a canonical text may be taken to support the view that x.<sup>230</sup>

He discusses Eichrodt in order to show the self-evident nature of the assertion that all of the Israelites (defining 'Israel' for Barton is a careful matter<sup>231</sup>) could not have thought the same way on ethical matters. Barton is unequivocal:

There is therefore a methodological difficulty about any view of ethics in Israel which attempts to treat the actual expressions of ethical viewpoints in the Old Testament as more or less typical examples of an 'Israelite' or 'Old Testament' ethic.<sup>232</sup>

For Barton, there can be no coherent expression of OT ethics. As he continues, it becomes clear that he views OT ethics as the investigation of *various* ethical values and standards among *various* sociological groups in *various* periods of Israel's history. Each reconstruction, then, must be precisely marked to identify *which* social

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<sup>227</sup> Barton, *Understanding*, pp. 44-64.

<sup>228</sup> J. Hempel, *Das Ethos des Alten Testaments*, BZAW 67 rev. ed. (Berlin: Toppelman, 1964); W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1967) pp. 316-374.

<sup>229</sup> Barton, *Understanding*, p. 44.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45. This is probably the most-quoted section of work in the modern debate.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.* p. 46.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.* p. 47.

group in *which* period the ethical value resides.<sup>233</sup> The ramifications of his insights are widely known and have generated quite a following.

I do think that there is a problem, however. It is certainly not the quality of the questions or even the answers, but, rather, it is the *nature* of the questions. Recalling the beginning anecdote on getting lost, these are ‘passenger’ questions and the difficulty arises when Barton attempts to move them from the passenger seat to the navigator’s chair. The real fatal flaw, to my mind, is that in order to reject coherence (which at the time of his article was heavily dependent on the command or revealed will of God<sup>234</sup>) Barton must distribute the same level of validity to *all* ethical values of *all* sociological groups in *all* the OT time periods. Kaiser critiques this idea:

Barton approached the discipline from a descriptive and anthropological point of view. The average Israelite’s attitude on these matters should have as much a right in shaping our ideas of norms as any claim based on the declared will or nature of God.<sup>235</sup>

Evidence of the seriousness of the flaw is demonstrated in the lament of scholars when they discuss the fact that the OT simply provides insufficient evidence for the sociological construct they desire to build.<sup>236</sup> For example, when Wilson compares the manifold sources for research on the NT ethical world with the problem of having only the OT as a ‘silent’ source, he highlights the issue.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Barton, *Understanding*, p. 52. An excellent example of this is H. McKeating, ‘Sanctions Against Adultery in Ancient Israelite Society with some Reflections on Methodology in the Study of Old Testament Ethics,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 11 (1979) pp. 57-72

<sup>234</sup> Barton, *Understanding*, pp. 45-7, 59; Kaiser, *Ethics*, p. 5; J. Barton, *Ethics and the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 2002) pp. 58-76; Wright, *OT Ethics*, pp. 423-5.

<sup>235</sup> Kaiser, *Approaches*, p. 290.

<sup>236</sup> Barton, *Understanding*, pp. 49-50; Wilson, *Conflict*, p. 196; E. Davies, *Problem*, p. 48; P. J. Haas, ‘The Quest for Hebrew Bible Ethics: A Jewish Response,’ *Semeia* 66 (1995) pp. 156-7; D. Knight, ‘Introduction: Ethics, Ancient Israel, and the Hebrew Bible,’ *Semeia* 66 (1995) p. 6. Cf. Birch, *Justice*, pp. 35-7.

<sup>237</sup> Wilson, *Conflict*, p. 196.

It is not, however, that the OT is ‘silent’ when the historian of Israelite ethics approaches for assistance; rather it is that the OT’s interests lie elsewhere—namely in presenting a story about Yahweh and his covenant people. The methodology is fatally flawed when it looks for pluralism within a story obsessed with portraying Yahweh and his ways as the sole, unassailable focal point of reality.<sup>238</sup>

**In summary**, I do not want to suggest or even imply that Barton’s questions are out-of-bounds, unhelpful, or incapable of assisting in understanding OT ethics. Rather, it is to suggest that Barton’s questions cannot stand alone. The discipline of OT ethics needs to consult the *covenant context* and the *canonical context*, and not just remain on the initial level with historical questions. Perhaps this is an even more poignant issue for OT ethics, since it presumes to discuss what Yahweh wants, and even commands, his people to do.

For instance, when Isaiah speaks of those “who join house to house, who add field to field” (5:8), he may well be alluding to a “moral world of the wealthy landowner” who has developed a value system that tolerates or condones such behaviour.<sup>239</sup> There certainly does appear to be some poetic justice in the recompense promised for those who do such things (5:9-10).<sup>240</sup> But it cannot be said that Isaiah presents that value system as a valid moral option. Isaiah’s chief task as a “covenant enforcer”<sup>241</sup> is not to accept *any* ethical system that deviates from the covenantal system. The prophet demands obeisance and promises retribution (poetic or otherwise) on the basis of a standard regarded as being normative in Israel. That is the point of the metaphorical story of the vineyard in 5:1-7; a story weaved to comment

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<sup>238</sup> Barton, *Understanding*, p. 47. Cf. Barton, *Natural Law*, p. 1.

<sup>239</sup> Wilson, *Conflict*, p. 196.

<sup>240</sup> J. Barton, ‘Natural Law and Poetic Justice in the Old Testament,’ *Journal of Theological Studies* 30.1 (1979) p. 9.

<sup>241</sup> G. D. Fee and D. Stuart, *How to Read the Bible for All Its Worth: A Guide to Understanding the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982) p. 151.

on the relationship of Yahweh and his people.<sup>242</sup> Questions concerning a “moral world of the wealthy landowner” that may be behind the text are certainly worthwhile for interpretation, but it is just as certain that they are initial questions, as the text of Isaiah clearly shows by rejecting that moral world.

The debate between ancient Israelite ethics and ethics of the OT should be handled in this way. The sociological study is valuable for history and for understanding the world of the OT documents, throughout its various time periods. However, the results of that study are not complete; they must be brought up into the meta-narrative to help interpret what those documents are communicating to us today.

### **The Authority of the Old Testament**

For the Christian, the authority of the OT is found in Jesus Christ. He is its main theme and its goal. After entering into time and space from outside, he affirmed himself as the fulfilment of the OT and thereby gave it lasting authority.<sup>243</sup> His resurrection is the verification of the assertions he made about the OT.<sup>244</sup> In the final analysis, then, the OT has some measure of authority for the Christian because Jesus said it does.

However, that assertion does not solve the problems of biblical authority. Acknowledging that there is authority does not explain its nature or its relationship to us. One proposal that some scholars have made is that the Bible does not have any authority for the Christian. However, they have arrived at this conclusion for different reasons.

Rodd suggests that the OT cannot extend authority over the Christian because the OT has no authority to extend. To even have the assumption that the OT has an

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<sup>242</sup> J. N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1-39* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986) p. 158.

<sup>243</sup> A. Motyer, *Look to the Rock* (Leister: Inter-Varsity Press, 1996) p. 21.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

inherent authority is to confront “insuperable problems,”<sup>245</sup> Rodd argues that interpreters cannot possess enough knowledge of the OT context to safely appropriate divine authority. There is simply too much temptation for interpreters to place their own concerns and values on top of the text and then pretend that the OT is addressing the modern concerns.<sup>246</sup>

Subjectivity is a real concern in the interpretation of a book so many hold to be from God. Rodd solves this problem by denying any authority to the OT—which makes *all* ethical interpretation subjective. In fact, he states that “...no external authority is possible for thoughtful human beings.”<sup>247</sup> By this he means that we are the authority because we choose to have the Bible function as an external control over our lives. For Rodd, there can only be two forms of authority: an external, imposing force, or a volitional bestowal of authority on something to which we subject ourselves.<sup>248</sup>

Another denial of the authority of the OT over a Christian comes from a dispensational perspective that so emphasises discontinuity that a meta-narrative is not possible. There cannot be any OT authority for a NT Christian. A scholar representing this position is Hays, as he does not accept that the OT has any ethical import for the Christian.<sup>249</sup> Thus, his use of the OT for ethics is, in essence, illustrating NT directives using OT examples and object lessons.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Rodd, *Glimpses*, p. 325.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid, p. 323.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid, p. 325.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid; J. Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1967) p. 30 understands these categories but insists that we must subject ourselves to the inherent authority of the OT.

<sup>249</sup> J. D. Hays, ‘Applying the Old Testament Law Today,’ *Bibliotheca Sacra* 158 (Jan-Mar 2001) pp. 21-35. Cf. R. Bauckham, *The Bible in Politics* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1989) p. 6.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid, p. 32



A different answer to the question of the OT's authority, one that is a step closer to Wright's position, has been given by Birch. He views the authority of the Bible as being derived since its authority lies beyond itself in its role of pointing to God.<sup>251</sup> The authority of scripture comes from the church's affirmation that it is a witness that mediates the truth of God to us by which we can make ethical decisions. Thus, the Bible's role is "primary but never sufficient," as there are other sources of authority to hold in dialogue with the Bible.<sup>252</sup> Birch describes the Bible's authoritative tasks as: providing a historical identity for the community; influencing the community's ability to discern God's will and activity; providing models of how the faithful in the past made ethical choices; and providing a witness of God.<sup>253</sup> The Bible does have authority as Birch sees it, but it is a derived authority from the reality it attests to, it is not inherent.

Wright states that his own view of biblical authority is indebted to O'Donovan's *Resurrection and Moral Order*.<sup>254</sup> While Wright acknowledges Rodd's idea of external power (which Wright terms "a military model of authority"<sup>255</sup>), he wants to expand the meaning of authority using O'Donovan's idea that "authority is a dimension of reality."<sup>256</sup>

That idea is that the created order itself provides an authority structure that we may freely act within but which also provides boundaries that exert their authority over us. The creation, then, is a reality with which we interact but must also calls at times for submission.<sup>257</sup> Gravity is an example of this idea; we can function freely

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<sup>251</sup> Birch, *Justice*, p. 34.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 456.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid, p. 457.

within it, but we can never escape its authority over us. At times, such as falling, its control over us is absolute.

Wright argues that the authority of the OT is that it introduces us to a reality and calls for our engagement with it. The four aspects of the reality are: the reality of God, which implies the authority of an ethic of imitation of him;<sup>258</sup> the reality of the OT story, which demands gratitude for God's actions in history on behalf of his people;<sup>259</sup> the reality of God's word, by which he conveys to us the covenantal expectations of God.<sup>260</sup> In this section, Wright interacts with Rodd's claim that there is no external authority:

When I choose to accept the authority of God as the supreme reality, I do not thereby place myself, and the rationality by which I make that choice, above the reality and authority of God. My rationality is simply the means of making that recognition, just as my will is the means of acting accordingly and responsibly.<sup>261</sup>

The final reality the OT introduces us to is the reality of the people of Israel, who function as a paradigm for us to discern what God requires of us.<sup>262</sup>

Wright argues that the authority of the OT is inherent because it is generated by the reality of God speaking into, and acting within history.<sup>263</sup> This idea is similar to Rogerson's "imperative of redemption." The imperative of redemption notes that the OT provides ethical direction on the basis of Yahweh's previous redemptive work, most commonly the Exodus:

We have a sort of *imitatio Dei* here, in which the imitation centres upon the fact that God in his grace and mercy redeemed Israel, a weak and insignificant people who were oppressed in slavery (cf. Deut. 7.7).<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid, p. 460.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid, p. 463.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid, p. 468.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid, p. 466.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid, p. 469.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid; idem, *Walking*, p. 49.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid, p. 18

**In conclusion,** ethical behaviour is a response to the reality of God's acting in history and particularly, his provision of redemption. That is where the ethical directives of the NT find their authority. As the authority of redemption passed from the OT to the NT, the ethical directives of the NT remained dependent on the OT for the *content* of those ethics. Thus, the ethical authority of the OT lies in its task to 'fill out' the NT ethics with the illustrative content of a reality grounded in the paradigm of ancient Israel.

The authority of OT ethics is the active redemptive reality of the NT—which comes from Christ. Thus, the OT can only be fully appropriated by those *within* NT redemption because the full weight of biblical teaching upon an ethical issue can only be felt *after* tracing the issue through the entire canon.

Wenham has explained the gap between what an OT law legislated (which was a minimal requirement) and the full intention of what Yahweh desired from his people in that law.<sup>265</sup> This gap appears to be solved in the Bible by the intertextual progression of an ethical issue. Jesus authoritatively addressed this gap in his Sermon on the Mount when he first referenced the minimal requirement ("you have heard that it was said") and then pronounced the real desire of God concerning a particular issue ("but I say to you").<sup>266</sup>

The way forward in applying the OT authoritatively lies in joining the content of OT ethics with the authoritative reality of the NT, which can be accomplished by

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<sup>265</sup> G. Wenham, 'The Gap Between Law and Ethics,' *Journal of Jewish Studies* 48.1 (1997) pp. 17-29.

<sup>266</sup> See Matt 5: 21-23; 27-28; 31-32; 33-34; 38-39; 43-44.

an ethical reading of the entire meta-narrative.<sup>267</sup> In terms of the Jubilee, its full application will, of necessity, remain within the new covenant community.

**Excursus: Modern Ethical Reflections on the Jubilee:**

There have been a number of recent publications about the Jubilee, many of them occasioned by two celebrations in its honour. In 1998, the World Council of Churches celebrated their Eighth Assembly, held on a septennial cycle. Konrad Reiser, then General Secretary, viewed the occasion as momentous: “The Eighth Assembly will therefore come after “seven weeks of years” corresponding directly to the biblical stipulations for the jubilee year in Leviticus 25.”<sup>268</sup> About the same time, Pope John Paul II declared the “Jubilee of the Year 2000.”<sup>269</sup>

These two events directed the attention of a large part of Christendom to consider the implications of a rather obscure OT institution. In addition to these events, Jubilee2000 was initiated as a comprehensive campaign to win relief for impoverished, indebted nations.<sup>270</sup> As the year 2000 approached, this extraordinary activity brought numerous reflections in publications that focused on the present state of global affairs and their relationship to the Jubilee.

It is possible to divide the sampling I examined of these writings into two general categories. First, there are the reflective articles that do not really interact with the Jubilee legislation. The writings frequently demonstrate a format in which the Jubilee is briefly mentioned at the beginning as an introduction to the author’s

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<sup>267</sup> Bauckham, *Politics*, pp. 15-17; Birch, *Justice*, pp. 45-46; J. S. Siker, *Scripture and Ethics: Twentieth-Century Portraits* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 1997) p. 100.

<sup>268</sup> K. Reiser, ‘An Ecumenical Jubilee: What it Might Mean for the Churches,’ *Bangalore Theological Forum* 27 (1995) p. 4.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> The organisation’s website is [www.j2000usa.org](http://www.j2000usa.org).

concern, and again at the end of the article as an *inclusio*, though often, the intervening material was only loosely connected to the Jubilee.<sup>271</sup>

A second group of articles exhibit an obvious familiarity with the Jubilee legislation and, frequently, an impressive grasp. The authors in this category have chosen to apply the Jubilee principles they discern directly to the modern world rather than to remain in the more descriptive task of exegesis.<sup>272</sup> The success or failure of this admirable task is directly proportionate to the author's interaction with the text.

Though this survey encompasses this wide spectrum of articles, a few generalisations can be made. **First**, many of the authors share a deep conviction that something is significantly wrong with today's world. The Jubilee is viewed either as the remedy or the preventative (and sometimes both) for the significant social evils of today. In this way, the Jubilee is relevant for modern society as the symbol, if not the embodiment, of the actual principles of remedy.<sup>273</sup> Identifying the social problem that requires remedy is characteristically subject to the predilections of the authors.

**Second**, the perceived needs that the authors address in their work has engendered (especially among popular articles), a condition much like the first quest for the historical Jesus where "...the "Jesuses" they produced all strikingly resembled

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<sup>271</sup> M. Dennis, 'For a Dignified Life,' *Sojourners* 27.3 (1998) pp. 30-34; J. B. Kim, 'Jubilee: For Whom?' *American Baptist Quarterly* 18.1 (1999) pp. 50-55; H. M. de Lange, 'The Jubilee Principle: Is it Relevant for Today?' *The Ecumenical Review* 38.4 (1986) pp. 437-443; G. D. Jones, 'Jubilee: To Free the Enslaved and Proclaim Liberty to the Captives,' *American Baptist Quarterly* 18.1 (1999) pp. 27-36.

<sup>272</sup> M. Harris, *Proclaim Jubilee* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); R. Kinsler and G. Kinsler, *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999); K. Reiser, *Ecumenical*, pp. 3-14; J.B. Jeyaraj, 'Jubilee and Society: Reflections,' *Evangelical Review of Theology* 25.4 (2001) pp. 337-349; R. H. Lowrey, *Sabbath and Jubilee* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2000); G. North, *Leviticus: An Economic Commentary* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1994); M. Westphal, 'Sing Jubilee,' *The Other Side* 150 (1984) pp. 22-24.

<sup>273</sup> Harris, *Proclaim*, p. 2.

whatever philosophy or ideology the given author himself propounded...”<sup>274</sup> In like manner, the principles of the Jubilee are applied to various conditions, such as: a mother-son teaching context about money,<sup>275</sup> an American farmer concerned about rural land use,<sup>276</sup> an African-American minister listing the very real social problems facing minorities,<sup>277</sup> general societal reform,<sup>278</sup> an African feminist perspective,<sup>279</sup> or even denominational renewal.<sup>280</sup>

**Third**, the vast majority of work relates to the idea of debt cancellation and economic oppression, with substantial interest in the international scope of the problem.<sup>281</sup> While the idea of debt remission cannot be removed from the Jubilee,<sup>282</sup> the intensity of modern concern for debt cancellation must be moderated by the fact that the Jubilee legislation does not *explicitly* address the topic.<sup>283</sup>

The conviction that debt cancellation is the centre of the Jubilee legislation has strengthened the prevalent idea that the fifty years contained such economic oppression that relief was necessary to maintain social stability. Thus, the Jubilee’s

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<sup>274</sup> C. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1997) p. 78.

<sup>275</sup> P. Kenney, ‘Jubilee Rest: A Call to Restoration of Relationships,’ *The Living Pulpit* (April-June 2001) p. 16.

<sup>276</sup> R. C. Austin, ‘Jubilee Now: The Political Necessity of the Biblical Call for Land Reform,’ *Sojourners* 20 (1991) pp. 26-30.

<sup>277</sup> G. D. Jones, *Jubilee*, pp. 27-36.

<sup>278</sup> J. B. Kim, *Jubilee*, pp. 50-55.

<sup>279</sup> M. Kanyoro, ‘A Life of Endless Struggle or Stubborn Hope: An African Feminine Perspective on the Jubilee,’ *The Ecumenical Review* 49 (1997) pp. 399-410.

<sup>280</sup> K. Raiser, ‘What Jubilee Might Mean Today,’ *Perspectives* 11 (1996) pp. 18-20; K. Phillips, ‘Statements of Concern for the Jubilee,’ *American Baptist Quarterly* 18.1 (1999) pp. 10-16.

<sup>281</sup> A few examples of this approach are: C. Myers, ‘God Speed the Year of Jubilee,’ *Sojourners* 27 (May-June 1998) pp. 25-28; L. Bush and J. Dekro, ‘Debt Relief and the Jubilee,’ *Tikkun* 14.5 (1999) pp. 16, 28; Dennis, *Dignified*, pp. 30-34; Kinslers, *Jubilee*, pp. 64-69.

<sup>282</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2173-4; North, *Leviticus*, p. 386.

<sup>283</sup> B. A. Levine, *Leviticus* סוף. JPS (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1989) p. 272; R. Jospe, ‘Sabbath, Sabbatical and Jubilee: Jewish Ethical Perspectives,’ in H. Ucko (ed.) *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility?* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997) p. 79; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2173-4.

intent "...was to break periodically the inevitable historical march of acquisition and domination leading to exclusion, and to restore the opportunities for life in community to all."<sup>284</sup> In reality, the text's injunctions are aimed at admonishing economically stable Israelites to assist their brothers who are experiencing economic instability and loss (cf. Lev 25: 35-38). An ethical call for covenant kindness does not necessarily establish, or preclude, an historical context of unkindness.

**Finally**, the applications drawn from the Jubilee are often international or global in scope. Discussions concern the problems and solutions to international debt,<sup>285</sup> economic means of production and distribution,<sup>286</sup> environmental issues,<sup>287</sup> and land reform.<sup>288</sup> The difficulty for such construction is that using the Jubilee to address global, impersonal issues tends to produce global, impersonal ethics.

Even given the corporate perspective of the OT,<sup>289</sup> this impersonal interpretation is problematic. Ethical responses to such large issues can take two forms. A person might participate in a movement designed to combat one of the above social evils,<sup>290</sup> or one might simply live out the *ethos* of the Jubilee in daily life, hopefully engaging with a hurting world.<sup>291</sup>

It must be sincerely affirmed that all of the above concerns are important. Billions of lives are daily affected by the aforementioned issues. The focus of this

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<sup>284</sup> Reiser, *Jubilee*, p. 18. Cf. Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 207.

<sup>285</sup> Kanyoro, *Feminine*, p. 405. See also n. 14 above.

<sup>286</sup> Myers, *God Speed*, pp. 24-28; Harris, *Proclaim*, 83-88; Lowrey, *Sabbath*, p. 149-150; de Lange, *Principle*, pp. 442-3.

<sup>287</sup> Austin, *Jubilee*, pp. 29-30; Lowrey, *Sabbath*, p. 151; J. Milgrom, 'Jubilee: A Rallying Cry for Today's Oppressed,' *Bible Review* 13 (April, 1997) pp. 16, 48.

<sup>288</sup> Austin, *Jubilee*, pp. 29-30; Jeyaraj, *Jubilee*, pp. 347-8; Study Document, 'American Baptists Proclaiming Jubilee Today: Biblical-Theological Foundations,' *American Baptist Quarterly* 18.1 (1999) p. 26.

<sup>289</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 51; J. Kuhrt, 'What Evangelicals Have Done to Sin,' *Fulcrum* (2007) @ [www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk](http://www.fulcrum-anglican.org.uk).

<sup>290</sup> Kinslers, *Jubilee*, p. 85; Harris, *Proclaim*, p. 72.

<sup>291</sup> Harris, *Proclaim*, pp. 92-111.

paper, however, is upon hermeneutics. Therefore, my questions are: Is the Jubilee being utilised properly in the above applications? Has the Jubilee become for these modern reflections a quintessential symbol: utopian in design and lacking any known historical setting or occurrence? What should we do with the Jubilee?

Against the backdrop of these questions, we will begin to look at the Jubilee using Wright's ethical triangle method.



## **Chapter Two**

### **The Theological Angle**

The Jubilee is an extraordinary event in the Bible and its sweeping legislation has captivated the imagination of all sorts of interpreters. A result of the diverse readings of the Jubilee is that often the legislation is interpreted as an occasion bigger than itself—an occasion whose import extends beyond its role and place in Israel (disputed as we have seen that to be). As legislation that appears to have no occurrence in subsequent biblical history, the Jubilee has become a powerful biblical symbol not only of the hope of restoration but also of the content of that hope, namely, the ways that restoration might occur, and the human conditions that require correction. It is thought the Jubilee must be read this way in order to have any influence in our world. Of course, the danger in such reading is that the Jubilee's original context is not referred to often enough to ensure that when its ethical influence is extended across the centuries, it has the right trajectory.

With Wright as a helpful guide in the establishing of a foundation upon which to discern key theological elements of the Jubilee, the goal of this chapter is to explore further—to see if there are certain elements of the Jubilee in its original context, which might allow us to see its place in the bigger picture of biblical theology. This, in turn, may help us to apply the Jubilee in a consistent manner.

### **Wright's Theological Angle on the Jubilee:**

As noted above,<sup>1</sup> the theological angle is of substantial import in Wright's ethical theory, and it is no less the case in regard to the Jubilee. Wright sees a profound spiritual and theological motivation undergirding the institution, and this theology is epitomised for him in Lev 25:23: "The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants," a passage which Wright sees as the theological rationale of the Jubilee and as a pivot between the other two

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<sup>1</sup> See p. 6.

angles (the social and the economic).<sup>2</sup> For Wright, the theological angle breaks down into two topics: the theology of the land, and the status of the Israelites.

### **The Theology of the Land**

Land was a central element in every thread of Israel's theology. Wright argues that the land played a dominant role in the patriarchal narratives; the Exodus story; the covenant and exilic threads; and even in cultic theology. The importance of the land is stated categorically in v. 23—the land belongs to Yahweh, and as such, it is under divine ownership.<sup>3</sup> What Yahweh does with his land is, therefore, an expression of his sovereign control over it. The history of the land is, in effect, the same as the history of Yahweh's divine control over Israel.<sup>4</sup>

Yahweh's sovereignty over the land makes his gift of it to the Israelites all the more remarkable. In this gifting, the land took on another dimension as it became the stage upon which the relationship between Yahweh and Israel played out, as Wright says, "...the land stood like a fulcrum in the relationship between God and Israel."<sup>5</sup> Because of his dual roles as owner and benefactor, Yahweh had the right to effect moral and practical demands upon Israel.<sup>6</sup> This is the background to the fallow land demands of both the Sabbatical in 25:1-7, and of the Jubilee in 25:11. Israel must demonstrate faith in Yahweh who, as the owner of the land and as their benefactor, can provide for them during the fallow years.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> C. J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God* (Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2006) p. 292; idem, *OT Ethics*, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 292.

<sup>4</sup> C. J. H. Wright, *Walking in the Ways of the Lord: The Ethical Authority of the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995) p. 200.

<sup>5</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 292

<sup>6</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 201

<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 203.

Thus, the land was the ultimate thermometer of the relationship between Israel and Yahweh.<sup>8</sup> Israel's responsive obedience to the demands of their King would mean that the people of Israel would remain safe and happy on the land; disobedience would result in famine, the sword, pestilence and, ultimately, exile.<sup>9</sup> The land was the tangible proof of Israel's unique relationship with Yahweh, and their "ownership" (or "lease") of the land given by Yahweh was tangible proof of membership in his people. To have the land was to belong to Yahweh and to his people.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Theology of Status and Belonging**

For Wright, the topic of the status of the Israelites flows smoothly out of the divine ownership/divine gift status of the land. He explains the social categories of the **גר** and **תושב** as sojourners and resident guests who, while living within Israel's borders, were not ethnic Israelites themselves.<sup>11</sup> Their livelihood was utterly dependent upon their Israelite employers, and it was this vulnerable position that made them the perfect "object lesson" in which the Israelites were to recognise themselves and their relationship to Yahweh. Again, Wright's dependence on Lev 25:23 is clear.<sup>12</sup> He demonstrates that the theological status of the Israelites (as Yahweh's sojourners/resident guests) is defined by the occurrences elsewhere in the law where Yahweh either shows his concern for literal sojourners/resident guests or where he references the concept as a way to instruct his people.<sup>13</sup>

For Wright, this theological status informs ethics, and particularly imitative ethics. The way Yahweh treats his sojourners/resident guests is the pattern by which

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p. 77.

<sup>9</sup> Lev 26: 25.

<sup>10</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 201.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, *Mission*, pp. 292-3.

the Israelites are to treat each other.<sup>14</sup> This imitation is especially noticeable in the three prominent references in Lev 25 to the Exodus event for ethical motivation. The Israelites were enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt, but now that they have been redeemed by Yahweh, they are his slaves and they cannot be owned by others again.<sup>15</sup> They are then called upon to treat each other as Yahweh has treated them.

Finally, Wright points out that the Day of Atonement, the pivotal “tenth day of the seventh month” provided Israel with an annual cultic experience of forgiveness. The corporate and individual remission of sin was actually a spiritual and theological motivation that was meant to overflow within the Israelites, resulting in immediate social results in respect to the remission of debt and enslavement.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Assessment of Wright’s Theological Angle:**

Wright has carefully exposed the theological foundation of the Jubilee, especially as to how these the land gift and the theological status of the Israelites illuminate the social and economic angles. For Wright, the Jubilee is a socio-economic event—it “...was in essence an economic institution.”<sup>17</sup> As he sees it, “The theology of Israel’s land and of Israel’s status before God combine *to affect* this very practical area of social economics” (emphasis added). At its core, then, the Jubilee is a socio-economic event, but one that cannot be rightly understood without the theological elements (land and status), which form it and provide the rationale for it.<sup>18</sup>

This said, I think the Jubilee might better be interpreted as a theological event, which works itself out in the socio-economic realm. This is certainly how the legislation appears in the rest of the Old Testament (and extra-biblical literature)—

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 293.

<sup>15</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 202.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 209.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 199.

<sup>18</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 292.

there is no real occurrence of the Jubilee in the life of Israel except for the theological exhortations and allusions made using Jubilee imagery, particularly in the prophets.<sup>19</sup> Since the Jubilee is never again used as a socio-economic model outside of Lev 25 (though referred to in Lev 27 and Num 36), why should we make its predominant interpretation socio-economic instead of allowing the theological usage of the Jubilee in the rest of the canon to guide its interpretation?<sup>20</sup>

By positing that the core of the Jubilee is its theological meaning, I am setting a trajectory that differs slightly from Wright's view that the Jubilee's core is socio-economic. This change should not be read as more than what it is. In essence, I am suggesting that, within Wright's triangle, emphasis should be placed on the theological angle, whereas Wright places the emphasis on the social. As I follow this trajectory, it will hopefully become evident that I am seeking to establish a theological meaning for the Jubilee that is able to transcend the gap between the Old and New Testaments.

Therefore, in the remainder of this chapter, I will explore three components of the Jubilee that develop the theological angle of the Jubilee. My hope is that the meaning of these components will together provide cohesion to the theological significance of the Jubilee, and will demonstrate that its meaning within the canon extends well beyond the limits of its immediate context as a phenomenon within ancient Israel, and that it must ultimately be appropriated by Christians.

The following three Jubilee components extend beyond Leviticus 25 and surface frequently within the biblical texts. The components are: 1) the significance of

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<sup>19</sup> Most notable are Isa 35: 5-7 and Isa 61:1-2.

<sup>20</sup> Wright's explanation for the lack of historical evidence for the Jubilee is that the economic abuses of the post-Solomon era were so extensive that the land tenure practices of the Jubilee were beyond adherence—there was nothing for the prophets to call the people back to. See Wright, *Walking*, p. 207.

the Jubilee's announcement on the Day of Atonement, or Yom Kippur, 2) the significance of announcing the Jubilee with the sounding of a שופר, 3) the pentacontal nature of the fiftieth year (i.e.  $7 \times 7 + 1$ ) in terms of being an occurrence of an "eighth day" event.

### **The Day of Atonement and the Year of Jubilee:**

The problem of the Jubilee's advent falling on Yom Kippur is a minor interpretive crux in which the question, "why does Jubilee begin on Yom Kippur?" has not been adequately answered.<sup>21</sup> Safren provides a survey of the various solutions and then notes in summary: "Scholarship on this passage has not, in my opinion, sufficiently clarified the reason for proclaiming the Jubilee specifically on the Day of Purgation...."<sup>22</sup>

Safren himself opts to join those scholars who propose that the answer lies in some form of a calendar-based explanation of the concurrence.<sup>23</sup> He holds that the first ten days of Tishri were entirely given to New Year's festivities distinguished by joy and celebration to which the Talmud bears witness.<sup>24</sup> Significantly, however, the identical ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were marked by increasing soteriological tension that found its release on the last day of the celebration (Yom Kippur), resulting either in forgiveness or condemnation. Safren regards this calendrical apex of both solemnity and celebration as the logical time for

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<sup>21</sup> J. D. Safren, 'Jubilee and the Day of Atonement,' in R. Margolin (ed.) *The Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1999) pp. 108-110; Cf. Elliger, *Leviticus*, p. 320.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p. 107.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2164-6 ; Levine, *Leviticus*; p. 171; M. Noth, *Leviticus: A Commentary* J.E. Anderson, trans. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965) p. 185; D.Wright, 'Atonement, Day of,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 2.72-76; but cf. Knohl, *Sanctuary*, p. 29, n. 63 for an alternate view.

<sup>24</sup> Safren. *Atonement*, p. 111; L. Morris, *The Atonement* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1983) p. 79.

the pronouncement of the beginning of the Year of Jubilee.<sup>25</sup> Noth also finds the reason for the Jubilee's advent on Yom Kippur in a calendar explanation. He addresses the problem by positing a textual emendation, namely, that the designation 'Day of Atonement' indicates a later reworking of a text that originally spoke of New Year festivities.<sup>26</sup>

A different approach finds the logical connection between the Jubilee and Yom Kippur in the similar benevolence Yahweh lavished on his people at both those times. Commentators have noted the similarity of Yahweh's gifts of restoration,<sup>27</sup> his forgiveness of sin or social unkindness,<sup>28</sup> and his reconciliation<sup>29</sup> and that similarity has then prompted them to ask how much the theology of Yom Kippur may have influenced the Jubilee legislation.<sup>30</sup> Clearly, a view that posits the theological dependence of the Jubilee on Yom Kippur is a viable alternative to a cultic calendar or source development theory.

This suggestion of a theological connection between Yom Kippur and the Jubilee has much to commend it, and, importantly, the restorative capacity of the two institutions is theological—derived from the covenant by means of the prescribed rituals of the cult. This restorative nature energises both the redemption legislation of the Jubilee and the motif of Sabbath restoration in Lev 25—evident in the nature of Yom Kippur as a *שבת שבתן*, a designation shared only with the Sabbath and the

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<sup>25</sup> Safren, *Atonement*, p. 112.

<sup>26</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 173; cf. Wright, *Atonement*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>27</sup> Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 553; J. Currid, *Leviticus*, (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2004) p. 326.

<sup>28</sup> R. Gane, *Leviticus, Numbers* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2004) p. 447; D. Tidball, *The Message of Leviticus*, *The Bible Speaks Today*, A. Motyer, (ed.) (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 2005) p. 295; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 434; L. De Chirico, 'The Biblical Jubilee,' *Evangelical Review of Theology* 23.4 (1999) p. 352.

<sup>29</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 303.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. J. Lefebvre, *Un Mémorial de la Création et de la Rédemption* (Bruxelles: Lumern Vitae, 2001) p. 29



Sabbatical Year.<sup>31</sup> These two cultic institutions (Yom Kippur and Jubilee) are presumably joined together in the text by their common nature as events through which the restorative power of Yahweh flows. The following observations present some additional correspondences, which may reveal a logic behind the author's decision to link them so intimately in the text of Lev 25:9.

**1) Both institutions occur at a divinely appointed time.** Scholars have suggested that the history of the development of Yom Kippur is one in which an ancient ritual was overlaid and shaped by layers of requirements and rituals, such as fasting, the scapegoat, and the influence of the New Year as the (assumed) original time of occurrence.<sup>32</sup> The legislation's pre-history is unsure; but what is certain is that the present text places the date of Yom Kippur on the tenth day of the seventh month. On this day, every fifty years, the Year of Jubilee begins, and the requirement that this event transpire accordingly is presented by the text as divine decree (25:9). The previous chapter noted that many scholars understand the determined, cyclical advent of the Jubilee as the main distinctive between the Jubilee release and the Mesopotamian *anduraru* and *mishnaru* decrees, in which periodic and unscheduled occurrences were decided by the king.<sup>33</sup>

**2) Both institutions bring restoration for a temporary but pre-determined period of time.** The purging of both the sanctuary and people on the Day of

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<sup>31</sup> H. L. Bosmen, *שָׁבַת*, in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 4.1157.

<sup>32</sup> See for example J. C. Rylaarsdam, 'Day of Atonement,' in G.A. Buttrick (ed.) *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) 2.314; J. Milgrom, 'Atonement, Day of' in K. Crim (ed.) *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) p. 83; D. Wright, *Atonement*, p. 75.

<sup>33</sup> R. Gnuse, *Jubilee*, p. 46; M. Weinfeld, 'Sabbatical Year and Jubilee in the Pentateuchal Laws,' in T. Veijola (ed.) *The Law in the Bible and in its Environment* (Goettingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990) p. 58; E. Neufeld, *Yobel and Semitta*, p. 55.

Atonement returned them to a state of cleanliness before the Lord (Lev 16:30). This return to purity occurred at the beginning of the New Year, prompting Porter to comment that the specific aim of Yom Kippur was to afford both the people and the sanctuary entrance into the New Year free from any carryover of the previous year's uncleanness.<sup>34</sup> The effective tenure of this restored harmony was also divinely decreed. It lasted exactly one year, until the evening of the ninth day of the seventh month (Lev 23:32), which was the starting point of the next Day of Atonement. The completion of that day would provide restoration for the following year, in continual one-year cycles.

By the same logic, the Year of Jubilee provided restoration from all forms of slavery and alienated ancestral land for a divinely decreed cycle of forty-nine years, when the next Jubilee began. One of the clear aims of the Jubilee institution was to provide restoration as specifically mandated and enacted by Yahweh.<sup>35</sup> The role of Yahweh as **לִשְׁלֹחַ** carried Israel into and through the forty-nine year period, in respect to the socio-economic issues found in Lev 25.

**3) Both institutions accomplish restoration on the strength of covenant-based prescriptions.** The primary purpose of the Jubilee is restoration by means of redemption. The word **לִשְׁלֹחַ** plays such a significant role in Lev 25 that it can be safely said that most of the ethical injunctions in the chapter have at their foundation the concept of redemption.<sup>36</sup> Morris' concise definition of redemption as "...deliverance

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<sup>34</sup> J. Porter, *Leviticus*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976) p. 124. Cf. Schenker, *Slaves*, p. 25, who compares the structure of Leviticus 16 and 25 as two chapters ending their respective sections (i.e. chaps. 1-16 and 17-26).

<sup>35</sup> M. Barker, 'The Time is Fulfilled: Jesus and Jubilee,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53.1 (2000) p. 24.

<sup>36</sup> However, cf. Wright, *OT Ethics*, 204-205 regarding the relation of Jubilee laws to redemption laws.

from some evil by payment of a price”<sup>37</sup> resonates closely with the economic costs involved in Jubilee restoration. The paying of this redemption price is defined by, and enacted through imitation of the cost to Yahweh in providing Israel with redemption from Egypt (cf. Exod 6:6). The Exodus is referenced three times for ethical motivation in Lev 25: 38, 42, 55. In a profound way, the redemptive ethics of the Jubilee are intended to mimic the activity of Yahweh as the great גאל, not only in respect to his Exodus deliverance, but also to his dominant role as the Redeemer of the Jubilee.<sup>38</sup>

Yom Kippur also establishes restoration, but through the specific prescriptions of the sacrificial system. Although the outcome of this restoration may accurately be termed redemption (broadly speaking, because of the theological outcome of the day’s rituals<sup>39</sup>), the text’s emphasis is clearly that of כפר. The overwhelming theological imperative of Lev 1-16 lies in the purging of the sanctuary and the people from sins and iniquities, whereas the OT concept of redemption tends to be a more physical—a “this-worldly act of buying back.”<sup>40</sup> Yom Kippur places its emphasis, not on the purchasing of a people, but rather on the temporary restoration of

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<sup>37</sup>L. Morris, ‘Redemption,’ in I.H. Marshall, A.R. Millard, J.I. Packer, D.J. Wiseman (eds.) *New Bible Dictionary 3<sup>rd</sup> edition* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1996) p. 1003.

<sup>38</sup>Hubbard, *Goel*, p. 13.

<sup>39</sup>S. Bacchiocchi, ‘Sabbatical Typologies of Messianic Redemption,’ *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 17.2 (1986) p. 167; L. Morris, *Atonement*, pp. 106-131; E. Harrison, ‘Redemption,’ in W. Elwell (ed.) *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984) p. 918.

<sup>40</sup>Bacchiocchi, *Redemption*, p. 167; cf. Harrison, *Redemption*, p. 918. The idea of a “spiritual” redemption from sins occurs infrequently in the OT canon (cf. Ps 130:8; Isa 59:20), but within the Pentateuch the concept is intimately tied to the physical deliverance of the Exodus event.

redemption's goal—the clear and harmonious relationship Yahweh began when he purchased his people.<sup>41</sup>

Significantly, this emphasis resonates throughout the entirety of the Jubilee legislation. Restoration is only achieved in and through the prescriptions of the covenant (particularly the cult), which Yahweh had with Israel. The same holds true for the way restoration was achieved on Yom Kippur.

**4) Both institutions present the restored state as analogous to the Sabbath ideal.** Yom Kippur is described as a *שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתֹת*, a superlative,<sup>42</sup> meaning a ‘Sabbath of complete rest’ or the “loftiest of all Sabbaths.”<sup>43</sup> It brings a yearlong restoration with all the accompanying connotations of rest, relationship, and liberation.<sup>44</sup> The imagery of the Sabbath likewise dominates the description of the Jubilee as a year deriving its very nature from the Sabbath based cultic calendar.<sup>45</sup> Their sharing of a common nature is particularly evident when studying the relation of the Jubilee and Sabbatical Year. Actually, it is the first Sabbath (described by means of a verb in Gen 2:2 and not as a noun<sup>46</sup>) in the Garden of Eden that provides the necessary data by which to understand the ‘picture’ of the Sabbatical and Jubilee.<sup>47</sup>

**5) Both institutions have the same two items as their objects of restoration.** First, there is a spatial element wherein a *specific location* is the focus of the restorative action. The purging of Yom Kippur centres on the sanctuary while the

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<sup>41</sup> F. R. Kinsler, ‘Leviticus 25,’ *Interpretation* 53.4 (1999) p. 395.

<sup>42</sup> Levine, *Leviticus*, p. 122; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 1959.

<sup>43</sup> A. ibn Ezra, *The Commentary of Abraham ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch*, vol. 3: *Leviticus*, trans. Jay F. Shachter (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav Publishing House, 1986) p. 80.

<sup>44</sup> Bacchiocchi, *Messianic Redemption*, p. 153.

<sup>45</sup> Westbrook, *Property*, p. 53; Carmichael, *Sabbatical/Jubilee*, p. 227; P. P. Jenson, *Graded Holiness: A Key to the Priestly Conception of the World*, JSOTSup (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) p. 106.

<sup>46</sup> Barker, *Sabbath*, p. 697.

<sup>47</sup> See the argument below in chapter four.

land is the focus of Jubilee redemption. Both these places are portrayed theologically as the point of contact where Yahweh meets his people, where he dwells with them and where they dwell before him.<sup>48</sup> Second, there is a relational element in which *people* are the focal point of restoration. Again, Yom Kippur concentrates on the people's ritual cleansing while the Year of Jubilee is concerned with the restoration of the people's relationships, namely rectifying the conditions of alienation and enslavement.

### **First Component Conclusions**

In summary of this first component, it appears that the reason the Jubilee begins on Yom Kippur is that both institutions are kindred events of restoration. The primary foci of the restorative activity are: the meeting places with Yahweh (in respect to the Jubilee it is the land; with Yom Kippur, it is the sancta), and his people who are to meet with him. In both cases, the restoration is a pre-announced, temporary return to the Sabbath ideal, enacted by the covenant/cult.

This fact suggests that the true difference between Israel's Jubilee and the Mesopotamian decrees discussed earlier is neither the regularity of the scheduled Jubilee<sup>49</sup>, nor simply that Yahweh is the king who decrees it (rather than newly ascended Mesopotamian kings<sup>50</sup>). Instead, its regular, cyclical nature is a result of it being a pre-determined, pentacontal "meeting" with Yahweh, the 𒀭𒌷 of Israel, when all relationships, people to each other as well as people to Yahweh, experience a clean start.

What has become apparent here, I think, is that by joining the Jubilee to the Day of Atonement (with the announcement on the tenth day) the writer *defines* what

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<sup>48</sup> C. Wright, *OT Ethics*, 94; Alexander, *Paradise*, p. 200.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Houston, *Jubilee*, p. 36.

<sup>50</sup> Gottwald, *Biblical Jubilee*, p. 35.

happens in the socio-economic arena. The restoration of land and people must be interpreted, in the first instance, as an extension, or outworking, of the religious and theological restoration accomplished on the tenth day of the seventh month. The meaning of the Jubilee, at its core, is beyond that of a socio-economic event—it is a restorative encounter with Yahweh.

With this nascent idea, we may turn attention to the second component, the significance of announcing the Jubilee with the sounding of a שופר. Here, the nature of the Jubilee as an “encounter” with Yahweh becomes more defined.

### **The Significance and Meaning of יובל**

An uncertainty surrounds the search for the meaning of יובל. On the one hand, there is a general consensus among critics that the word’s etymology originates from “... ‘ram,’ and by extension, ‘ram’s horn.’”<sup>51</sup> This consensus reached such certitude that North (who did not agree with the consensus) felt compelled to write (fifty-seven years ago!) that it enjoys an “almost dogmatic unanimity.”<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, while there are certainly informative etymological connections with Ancient Near East language,<sup>53</sup> the resulting arguments for this presumed origin and meaning of יובל are still considered inconclusive.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> American Baptists, *Proclaiming*, p. 20.

<sup>52</sup> North, *Sociology*, p. 100.

<sup>53</sup> R. O’Connell, ‘יובל,’ in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 2:419; R. North, ‘יובל,’ in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.) D. E. Green trans., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) 6: 1-6.

<sup>54</sup> D. L. Baker, ‘The Jubilee and the Millenium,’ *Themelios* 24.1 (1998) p. 44; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 434; C. J. H. Wright, ‘Jubilee, Year of,’ in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 3:1025.

More persuasive than etymology is van Selm's method of drawing the definition of יובל out of the two other passages where יובל trumpets occur.<sup>55</sup> These passages are the theophanies of Exodus 19 at Sinai, and the fall of Jericho in Joshua 6. These passages are the only two where the יובל trumpet occurs outside of the Year of Jubilee context.

Of the twenty-seven occurrences of יובל in the OT, twenty-one of them are concerned with the Jubilee institution. They appear in Lev 25, and then Lev 27 in legislation concerning vowed things, and then once in Num 36:4, in a context of allocating land to Zelophehad's daughters. The remaining six uses are located in the theophany of Sinai (Exod 19:13), and in the story of the fall of Jericho (Josh 6:4,5,6,8,13). By contrast, שופר occurs some seventy-two times throughout the entire OT. The disproportionate use suggests that either there is a difference in meaning or, perhaps, that the use of the synonym יובל faded away in time, in favour of the alternate שופר.<sup>56</sup> The situation becomes further complicated by the use in Josh 6:5 of קרן instead of שופר (היובל בקרן).

The most common interpretation of יובל is that it is virtually synonymous with other trumpet or horn words, such as קרן or שופר.<sup>57</sup> The terms appear in close proximity and are difficult to separate. Thus, in Josh 6:4-6, a standard interpretation

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<sup>55</sup> A. van Selms, 'Jubilee, Year of,' in K. Crim (ed.) *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible Supplementary Volume* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) p. 496.

<sup>56</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, 319, comments that if יובל meant ram's horn, it quickly was forgotten as Joshua 6 needed שופר to explain it. Noth, *Leviticus*, 184, thought that יובל came from a time before שופר had come into prominence.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid; I. H. Jones, 'Music and Musical Instruments,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 4:939; E. Werner, 'Musical Instruments,' in G.A. Buttrick (ed.) *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) 3:472; Chirichigno, *Debt Slavery*, p. 314.

of שופרות היובלם (“trumpets of ram’s horns”) is that היובלם references the animal that the שופר was made of.<sup>58</sup>

In Josh 6:5, במשך בקרן היובל is translated “long blast with the ram’s horn,” but, a statement follows immediately about hearing the שופר—translated as “trumpet.” And, while יובל is still viewed as describing the type of horn in 6:5, it is actually a קרן that is being sounded. So, then, יובל qualifies both שופר and קרן, which means that קרן must be added to the synonym group of שופר and יובל, and, apparently, there is ultimately no differentiation between any of the *three* words.<sup>59</sup>

However, this idea of synonymity is untenable. When reading Lev 25:10, it would be necessary for the reader to read that a שופר was blown at the start of the Jubilee but understand it to be the same as a יובל—יובל. And, that reading would have to be based on the assumption that יובל has its referent in שופר.

If the trumpet words bear no difference in meaning, all that is left is confusion.<sup>60</sup> North quotes Klostermann’ scepticism in this regard:

It is a long way from lamb to ram, from ram to ram’s horn, from ram’s horn to an instrument made from it or to look like it, from the instrument to its blast, and finally from the blast to the period of time which was pronounced by it.<sup>61</sup>

Quite simply, the word יובל occurs in a variety of contexts in the text, and those uses are too disparate to be quickly solved by the definition of “ram’s horn.” If the search remains etymological, however, then only one meaning can be original. The meaning of the word must be derived from the context rather than etymology.

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<sup>58</sup> O’Connell, יובל, p. 419.

<sup>59</sup> Jones, *Music*, p. 937 does this very thing.

<sup>60</sup> Ramban, *Leviticus*, p. 436.

<sup>61</sup> North, *Sociology*, 102.



Perhaps a way forward is to review North's assertion that none of the six uses of יובל (apart from the Jubilee) demands a material horn. If that is true, but as we just saw, within the stories of the Exodus and Joshua passages יובל is used intermittently with other "trumpet words," then we must ask a different question. If יובל does not qualify a type of material horn, then what does it qualify?

North had to work hard to prove his theory because Exod 19:13, in contrast to Joshua 6, does not have a word for horn or trumpet appearing alongside יובל. Instead, במשך היובל is translated "the trumpet sounds a long blast" (from משך meaning 'drawing out'<sup>62</sup>) so that יובל (at least in North's view) again becomes an adjective.<sup>63</sup>

This conclusion prompted North to make his famous claim that nowhere in the OT is יובל designated as a "material horn," as it understood in the critical consensus.<sup>64</sup> In defence, North argues that there is always a trumpet word accompanying each usage. In his interpretation of Ex 19:13, he takes משך (cf. Josh 6:5) specifically to mean the drawing or blowing of a horn.<sup>65</sup> For North, then, the term יובל must not be defined in terms of an actual trumpet but, instead, by the more prevalent occurrence of the Jubilee use (such as Lev 25:10). Thus, his choice of definition for יובל is: "to bring abundantly" or "bring, send back."<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> BDB p. 604c; J. Currid, *Exodus, Volume 2* (Darlington, UK: Evangelical Press, 2001) p. 22.

<sup>63</sup> North, יובל, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> North, *Sociology*, 102. This translation has strong overtones provided by the LXX's translation of 'release,' and is in close affinity with Josephus' translation, Josephus, *Antiquities* 3.12 (283), which we will review below.

This same discussion occurred many centuries ago in the writings of the great Jewish scholars, Rashi and Ramban. Rashi proposed that **יובל** "...is its name-with reference to the "sounding of the Shofar" (the ram's horn which is called **יובל**...)""<sup>67</sup> Ramban, in response, asked an astute question, "...for what sense is there of saying of a year that "it shall be 'a blowing' unto you"...?"<sup>68</sup> Ramban asserted a fundamental point often overlooked by moderns that the text simply does not say that the Jubilee is begun by the blowing of a **יובל**, but rather by the blowing of a **שופר**.<sup>69</sup>

Ramban continued his argument by noting that in the Mishnah, R. Judah taught that while the New Year is announced with a ram's horn, only the Jubilee is announced with a wild goat horn.<sup>70</sup> If it is announced by a wild goat's horn, Ramban asked, why is it called **יובל**, the year of the ram's horn?<sup>71</sup> Again, it appears that it is only by positing the two words (**יובל** and **שופר**) as strict synonyms that the conclusion of Rashi and the modern consensus can be carried off.

Ramban advanced his thought by arguing that **יובל** should be seen to refer to the proclamation of **דִּרְוֹר** that was proclaimed by the horn.<sup>72</sup> He did state that the **שופרות היובל** (Josh 6:4) is "horn of the rams."<sup>73</sup> Thus, Ramban developed a view where the **יובל** could signify a ram's horn but that the meaning of the institution was separate from the etymology. By interpreting **יובל** to mean a

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<sup>67</sup> Rashi, *Leviticus*, M. Rosenbaum and A. M. Silbermann, trans. and annotations by (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., n.d.) p. 114b.

<sup>68</sup> Ramban Nachmanides. *Commentary on the Torah-ויקרא*, C. B. Chavel, trans. and annotations (New York: Shilo Publishing Co., 1974) p. 436.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid, 437.

<sup>70</sup> m. Rosh Ha-Shanah 3.5

<sup>71</sup> Ramban, *Leviticus*, p. 437.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

‘bringing’ of liberty, Ramban arrived at a position similar to that held by North centuries later.<sup>74</sup> In the course of this argumentation, Ramban discussed (and then discarded) an option worth reconsidering. Ramban wrote:

Perhaps Scripture is stating: “*It is a Jubilee distinguishable by that name which I have called it, and it shall be unto all of you known by the blowing of the Shofar which you will do thereon, reminding you of the purport [of the Jubilee year], that in it every man shall return unto his possession, and every man unto his family.*” Similarly, *A Jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you* means that it shall be a Jubilee unto you, that *ye shall not sow neither reap*, that is to say, it is known by its name that it is to be so.<sup>75</sup> (italics his)

Ramban presents here the possibility that the *nature* of the Jubilee has been determined by Yahweh and the horn *was his way of announcing* the event. The name יובל is thus the title given to the event. Although Ramban rejected this view, I think that, with some qualifications, it might be worth considering. The important distinction to be explored is whether Lev 25:10 describes a particular type of שופר, that is to say, one that signals a יובל event, or if it speaks of the שופר as a יובל, meaning a horn from a ram.

Morgenstern makes an important extension of this argument<sup>76</sup> as he reasons that the blowing of a שופר is to be sharply distinguished from the blowing of a יובל. He bases his argument on the observation of trumpet words in Joshua 6. An ordinary event, he explains, required only an ordinary שופר, while an occasion of importance necessitated the use of an instrument of greater sanctity and even supernatural power, blown only by priests and, presumably, by God himself (Exod 19:16).<sup>77</sup> Although Morgenstern speculates about which occasions a יובל may have been required (for

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 438.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid, 437.

<sup>76</sup> J. Morgenstern, ‘Jubilee, Year of,’ in G.A. Buttrick (ed.) *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) 2:1001.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

example, as with the ‘great trumpet’—though not named a יובל—in Isa 27:13), he does not provide a complete explanation why, when the horn in Ex 19 and the horn accompanying the fall of the walls at Jericho (Josh 6:16) actually sound, the text specifically states it was a שופר rather than a יובל. His conclusion, nonetheless, is accurate:

All this suggests cogently that the ram’s-horn trumpet was of unusual character, used only upon extraordinary occasions and for some particular purpose (cf. Exod. 19:13b).<sup>78</sup>

Morgenstern’s reasoning is similar to Ramban’s. The Jubilee is specifically stated to be announced by a שופר rather than a יובל. Some accounting must be made of that fact. Morgenstern’s theory may need further detail but he provides a significant contribution towards that explanation. He and Ramban are in essential agreement that the שופר may, under certain and rare circumstances, be considered a יובל in its function and significance.<sup>79</sup>

Thus, יובל may indeed be a horn (as Ramban asserts), but more importantly, the יובל is a description of the *type* of context, or, I would suggest, the type-scene in which a שופר is being sounded.<sup>80</sup> Again, Ramban sees the context as a bringing of liberty—a view with much merit.

DeChirico suggests the word יובל conveys a dual meaning: first, of a ram’s horn as an instrument (“...to mark a sacred moment for the people of Israel”), and second, as a symbol of restitution (to summarise the principle activities marking out

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> A. P. Ross, *Holiness to the Lord* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002) p. 459, “...yobel means the time of granting liberty that began with the blowing of the ram’s horn.”

the sacred year).<sup>81</sup> DeChirico's argument contains the basic elements of a definition for יובל, namely that the literary context (and not etymology) supplies the indication when a שופר blast is one of יובל significance. What exactly sets that context apart is yet to be determined.

The solution of a certain יובל context alleviates the difficulty of the disparity between the definition of "ram's horn" and the very different meaning of יובל in the LXX. In Lev 25, the LXX translates both יובל and דרור with αφεσις, 'release.' Then in 25:10,11-13, יובל is translated by αφεσεως σημια. Wevers explains that the difference in terminology stems from the difficulty of attempting to translate one word by two different definitions—a ram's horn and a year of release.<sup>82</sup> However, Wevers notes the LXX translator's 'uncertainty' continues only until v. 28, after which αφεσις is used alone to describe the elements of the Year of Jubilee.<sup>83</sup> This change is likely due to the singular definition of release discussed in the text after v. 28.

The importance here lies in the choice of the LXX to translate יובל with αφεσις. The use of αφεσις in Lev 16:26 to describe the goat set aside for release (into the desert<sup>84</sup>) at Yom Kippur only confirms the point that the LXX understood a meaning in יובל that was much deeper than an indicator of which animal a horn came from.

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<sup>81</sup> De Chirico, *Biblical Jubilee*, p. 348. Cf. P. J. Budd, *Leviticus* (London: Marshall Pickering, 1996) p. 341, "...the probability is that the instrument was blown only on momentous sacred occasions."

<sup>82</sup> J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus: SBL Septuagint and Cognate Studies 44*, (Atlanta GA: Scholars Press, 1997) p. 406.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid, p. 255.

Josephus' description of יובל as liberty is in close agreement with the idea of the LXX of αφεσις, and that is an idea much more in line with with Ramban. The two definitions of יובל ("ram's horn" and "return, release") are quite distinct, and the question remains whether translating יובל as either "ram's horn" or "release" is adequate for the Jubilee, as well as Exod 19 and Josh 6. In other words, the rendering "ram's horn" does not help define a restorative year, while the rendering "release, return" does not make much sense in the theophany contexts!

### **Exploring יובל as a Type-Scene:**

In his study of biblical trumpets, Borland suggests that we allow the very first episode involving horns/trumpets in the Pentateuch to instruct us in determining the meaning of subsequent occurrences.<sup>85</sup> Lowrey provides a clear summation of this approach:

Jubilee observance, announced with trumpet blast on the Day of Atonement, is a Sinai experience for Israel, a direct encounter with the God who redeems and frees them from all human bondage.<sup>86</sup>

This conclusion is in harmony with the suggestion above that the Jubilee begins on the Day of Atonement for reasons of encounter, redemption, and restoration.

The first biblical episode with a horn is Exod 19, and there are a few points to notice. In the narrative of Exod 19:13, יובל occurs in the speech Yahweh delivers to Moses warning the Israelites not to touch the mountain until the יובל sounds. As mentioned earlier, when the blast sounds in vv. 16,19, it is a שופר. Also mentioned

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<sup>85</sup> J. Borland, 'The Meaning and Identification of God's Eschatological Trumpets,' in D.W. Baker (ed.), *Looking Into the Future: Evangelical Studies in Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2001) pp. 63-73.

<sup>86</sup>Lowrey, *Sabbath*, p. 72.

earlier, there is a similar interchange of terms between the **הַיּוֹבֵלִים** and the **שׁוֹפָר** of Josh 6.

This is the context that is extraordinary; it is a context of **יּוֹבֵל** significance. Those two **שׁוֹפָר** blasts indicate that something else is happening at those two events, just as a ordinary signature, in specific contexts, can have extraordinary significance—such as initiating a house mortgage or entering a state of matrimony. The task, again, is to determine exactly what the context is.

Milgrom helpfully cites the observations of Abravanel concerning the correspondences between the Exod 19 theophany and Lev 25:

The Torah was revealed to Israel fifty days after the Exodus (assuming that Pentecost coincided with the date of the Sinaitic revelation); the divine revelation was accompanied by shofar blasts (ex 19:16,19); it required the sanctification of Mt. Sinai (19:25), and it made use of a yobel (v.13).<sup>87</sup>

Abravanel's observations provides a helpful starting point. Following his lead, it may be asked if the introduction Lev 25:1, **וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי** (unique within Leviticus and generally considered a bit enigmatic<sup>88</sup>), might have a discernable purpose. Perhaps the introduction is there so that the reader will recall the first **יּוֹבֵל** in Exod 19. Lowrey is convinced of this and he cites the introduction of 25:1 and the conclusion of 26:46 as “an extraordinary inclusion” that highlights the encounter with Yahweh and the intensity of the subsequent legislation in chaps. 25-26.<sup>89</sup>

Significantly, there are a number of other correspondences between Exod 19 and Lev 25. **First**, Moses plays a prominent role of mediation in both passages. **Second**, the theme of the people of God as ‘insiders’ and others as ‘outsiders’ is

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<sup>87</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2169.

<sup>88</sup> Rashbam, *Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers*, M. I. Lockshin, trans, (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2001) 149; Elliger, *Leviticus*, p. 343; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 433; Lowery, *Sabbath*, p. 58; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 2342-3.

<sup>89</sup> Lowrey, *Sabbath*, p. 71.

developed (Exod 19:4-6; Lev 25: 44-46; 26: 8, 17, 25 among many). **Third**, Yahweh makes a statement of possession in Exod 19:6, כִּי־לִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ, bearing the clear implication of Israel's place within his possession. This brief quote is quite similar to Yahweh's claim in Lev 25:23, כִּי־לִי־יְהוָה־הָאָרֶץ, where the explicit concern is the land given to Israel as a אֲחֻזָּה.

**Fourth**, both passages have a preparatory time awaiting the יוֹבֵל (three days in Exod 19 and forty-nine years in Lev 25). Though there is a disparity in the length of time the Israelites must wait before the horn announces Yahweh's appearance, the nature of those waiting periods are the same. Both are times filled with religious and ethical injunctions aimed at preparing the people for the pre-determined divine encounter. The cyclical nature of the Jubilee means that the preparation time for the oncoming Jubilee is the same period in which the ethical ramifications and injunctions from the past Jubilee are to be implemented.

**Fifth**, as Lowrey points out, both waiting periods have an encounter with Yahweh at their core.<sup>90</sup> Exod 19 is far more dramatic than the nuanced legislation of Lev 25, but like the connection with Yom Kippur and the role of Yahweh as Israel's אֱלֹהִים during the Jubilee (25: 28, 33, 54), the similarity of יוֹבֵל events contribute to the conclusion that the יוֹבֵל is an encounter with Yahweh. **Sixth**, in both passages it is Yahweh who announces the event of יוֹבֵל importance (Exod 19:13; Lev 25:10). And seventh, both contexts include a requirement for consecration.

The **seventh** similarity of consecration is another significant element in Exod 19 that also appears in the other יוֹבֵל events. Though Exod 19 is difficult in matters

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid.



of composition (such as possible anachronisms and theophany types<sup>91</sup>), the narrative progression of the theophany is clear enough to invite comparisons with Lev 25:<sup>92</sup>

1) The focus of the story is the appearance of Yahweh in all his glory.

2) Before Yahweh appeared to the Israelites, he required that both they (v. 10) and the mountain (v. 23) be consecrated. The same emphasis on people and place was seen earlier concerning the restoration provided by Yom Kippur and Jubilee.

The requirements for קדש in Exod 19 are in the *piel* stem, signifying the factitive, that is to say, a state or condition of holiness/consecration is being established.<sup>93</sup> Naude points out that the condition develops through a dual movement between subject and object. The object moves away from the common realm in an act of separation and, at the same time, moves toward the subject who is in the divine realm. That act is an act of consecration.<sup>94</sup> Yahweh clearly wishes to meet with his people in a new and significant way, yet that this can only transpire if his terms of encounter are met. And Yahweh's terms require that his appearance be greeted by an expectant people, fully prepared and consecrated for an event that will occur in a fully prepared and consecrated place.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Cf. Enns, *Exodus*, pp. 393-4; E. C. Kingsbury, 'The Theophany Topos and the Mountain of God,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 86.2 (1967) pp. 207-8.

<sup>92</sup> Alexander, *Paradise*, pp. 62-79.

<sup>93</sup> H. Ringgren, 'קדש,' in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.) D. E. Green, trans. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) 12: 532; J. A. Naude, 'קדש,' in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 3:884; H.-P. Muller, 'קדש,' in E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds.) M.E. Biddle, trans. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997) 3:1105.

<sup>94</sup> Naude, 'קדש,' p. 885.

<sup>95</sup> Currid, *Exodus*, p. 18; W. Kornfeld, 'קדש,' in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.) D. E. Green, trans. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1990) 12:530.

3) The reason the location of meeting is considered holy is simply that Yahweh chooses to reveal himself there. Any place that Yahweh reveals himself is intrinsically holy because he makes it so.<sup>96</sup> As Eichrodt observes, “The uniqueness of the OT definition of holiness lies not in its elevated moral standard, but in the personal quality of the God to which it refers.”<sup>97</sup> The primary concern of Yahweh is not that he appears to recipients who have met an ethical standard (an objective quite impossible for a mountain to obtain), but rather that he is met by recipients in a condition compatible with his state of wholly otherness.<sup>98</sup> Therefore, the first three things that indicate a **יֹוֹבֵל** type-scene are illuminated by consecration in Exod 19: a holy God, a holy or consecrated place, and a prepared and consecrated people.

4) The requirement of consecration is that it reveals the theophany as a cultic event.<sup>99</sup> The **שׁוֹפָר** blast alone is to reveal this. But added to it are: the influence of ritual requirements (washing clothes, abstaining from sex) and the descent of the **כְּבוֹד** upon the mountaintop (v.16). The appearance of the glory-cloud is similar to the Tent theophanies of Exod 40 and Lev 9—to the degree that many Exodus commentators view the mountain in three levels of holiness and the access to it similar to that of the Tent (the people at the base, the elders ascending halfway and Moses alone approaching Yahweh at the top, Exod 24:1).<sup>100</sup>

5) The emphasis on consecration that preceded the appearance of Yahweh was for a specific purpose. The theophany occurred for the purpose of giving the law, to

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<sup>96</sup> E. F. Harrison, ‘Holiness; Holy,’ in G. W. Bromiley (gen. ed.) *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982) 2:726.

<sup>97</sup> Eichrodt, *OT Theology*, 1:276

<sup>98</sup> Harrison, *Holiness*, p. 275.

<sup>99</sup> Noth, *Exodus*, p. 159; J. P. Hyatt, *Commentary on Exodus*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1971), p. 201.

<sup>100</sup> N. H. Sarna, **שְׁמִי** *Exodus*, JPS. (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991) p. 105; Enns, *Exodus*, p. 391.

prescribe how the people were to live before Yahweh as a priestly kingdom and holy nation.

So, in summarising the theophany of Exod 19 with its requirement of consecration, it appears that there are five motifs to consider:

A holy God,  
who appears in a cultic event,  
to a people who are prepared and consecrated to meet him,  
at a holy location,  
in order to receive the gift he intends to deliver to them.

This five-fold pattern is, I would suggest, a type-scene that is initially indicated by the sounding of the **יובל** trumpet. The Year of Jubilee follows the same pattern, though in a less spectacular fashion.

1) The holiness of God, as it relates to a variety of contexts, remains the topic of Leviticus from the declaration of 19: 2 onward (cf. 20: 26, 21: 8). Further,

2) God's holiness is intimately tied to the consecration of his people in a kind of call-and-response expectation of their holiness. Consecration in chap. 25 takes place at the start of the Year, demonstrated by the Day of Atonement as the time of inception. While the text never explicitly says that Yom Kippur brings consecration, it is the highest and holiest of days, a **שבת שבתון** (23:32), and a **מקרא קדש** (23:27).

Implicitly, the text of Lev 25 adds to the previous chapters' ethical call the element of Yom Kippur, whereby the status of holiness attained that day through the atoning sacrifices of the cult prepared the people for the Jubilee, which was announced in the evening of that day.

Earlier, it was suggested that one of the connections between the Day of Atonement and the Jubilee was this aspect of restoration of a clear, harmonious

relationship.<sup>101</sup> As the culmination of “H”, it is thought that Lev 25 combines the three themes of: Yahweh’s holiness (both as an attribute and ethical purity); a strong demand for a consecrated people and priesthood (19:2; 20:7,8,26; 21:8,15,23; 22:9,16,32) and the potential for consecration through the Jubilee’s link with Yom Kippur and the Sabbatical.<sup>102</sup>

3) The Jubilee is a cultic event culminating the cultic calendar.<sup>103</sup> The cultic contributions of Yom Kippur support that claim, as do the trumpet blast.

4) The holy location for the encounter with Yahweh occurs not in a holy space but in a consecrated time, the heavy emphasis in the legislation on land notwithstanding. The call for a prepared and consecrated people is different than the consecrated, or holy, nature of the Year as a meeting place. It is the fiftieth year that is consecrated. Along with the Sabbath, the Jubilee is the only other time period demanding Israel’s consecration.<sup>104</sup>

Milgrom is, presumably, correct in his assertion that it is the blowing of the horn and the absence of agricultural labour that consecrate the Year.<sup>105</sup> The Jubilee occurs “throughout all your land” and its timing as a cyclical, cultic festival alerts us to its true nature as a covenantal, relational meeting with Yahweh. Exod 23:17 prescribes three similar cultic festival ‘meetings’ with Yahweh per year but the Jubilee transcends them for three reasons: its 7x7+1 occurrence; its inception by יובל

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<sup>101</sup>Cf. Lowrey, *Sabbath*, p. 71, who sees the Jubilee as preparation for an encounter but never explains when the encounter occurs.

<sup>102</sup>Contra R. Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) p. 145, who argues that the use of ‘holy,’ limited to chaps. 19-22 and 11:44-45, avert the conclusion of a unified ‘Holiness’ Code.

<sup>103</sup>A. Noordtzij, *Leviticus*, R. Togtman, trans. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982) pp. 253, 261.

<sup>104</sup>Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2166.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid. In all three passages, the means of consecration is not prescribed, simply the command.

on the Day of Atonement; and by the appearance of Yahweh as **נא**, restoring the most recalcitrant of conditions. The Jubilee is the quintessential encounter with Yahweh.

5) The purpose of the Jubilee encounter is seen in v.10; the Year is for Yahweh to deliver **נא**, the content of which is defined by the rest of the chapter.

The Jubilee, then, contains type-scene elements similar to those of Exod 19 where: 1) a holy God comes 2) to a holy location (of time), 3) to meet a prepared and consecrated people 4) in a cultic event (Yom Kippur) 5) with the intent of delivering **נא** to them.

These same five elements are also found in the final appearance of **נא** in the story of Jericho. The elements of a **holy God** and a **holy place** are mentioned before the encounter with the divine commander in Josh 5:13-15. The figure with the unsheathed sword is an unmistakable sign of oncoming divine war.<sup>106</sup> He commands Joshua to take off his shoes as he is standing on holy ground, described in v.13 as **בִּירֵיחוֹ**—probably to be interpreted as ‘in the vicinity of’ rather than actually ‘in’ the as-yet unconquered city.<sup>107</sup> This demand was clearly intended to recall Moses at the mountain of God in Exod 3. Hess gives three reasons why the divine commander should be seen as a “manifestation of the divine presence.”<sup>108</sup> First, Joshua worships him. Second, holiness is what the divine presence brings (similar to Eichrodt’s earlier

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<sup>106</sup> R. D. Nelson, *Joshua: A Commentary*, OTL (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1997) p. 81.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 80.

<sup>108</sup> R. S. Hess, *Joshua: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996) p. 127.

quote). Third, the text blends the appearance of the divine commander with the battle plans from Yahweh in 6:2-5.<sup>109</sup>

Jericho is also a **cultic event**. The presence of the ark, priests, processions and the extensive use of horns provide strong cultic overtones, not to mention the continued use of **תְּרוּעָה** (all three **יובל** passages employ it<sup>110</sup>). On the basis of these elements, scholars have labelled Jericho a cultic event.<sup>111</sup> The preparation of the people is also redolent of the cultus since the Israelites are circumcised in 5:8-9, ostensibly in preparation for the Passover festival, but also to attain the covenantal fidelity necessary to receive the land (5:4-7).<sup>112</sup> The mention of consecration in 3:5 addresses the crossing of the Jordan rather than the event of Jericho. Also, when the **חַטָּאת** sin of Achan had devoted Israel itself to destruction, Yahweh again commanded the Israelites' re-consecration (7:13), likely indicating that their consecration had been in effect until Achan's folly.

The idea of consecration at Jericho is closely tied to **the gift Yahweh wishes to give** the Israelites--the Promised Land. The designation of Jericho as a holy location (5:15) necessitated not only the positive consecration of the Israelites but also the negative consecration of the people of Jericho. They are put under **חַטָּאת**, a state

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid. Cf. T. Longman III, 'The Case for Spiritual Continuity,' in C.S. Cowles (et al.) *Show Them no Mercy: 4 Views on God and Canaanite Genocide* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing Company, 2003) p. 164, who unequivocally says the figure is Yahweh.

<sup>110</sup> H-P. Muller, 'Die Kultische Darstellung der Theophanie,' *Vetus Testamentum* 14.2 (1964) p. 188.

<sup>111</sup> G. Mitchell, *Together in the Land: A Reading of the Book of Joshua*, JSOTSup 134 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) p. 51; Muller, *Darstellung*, p. 184.

<sup>112</sup> Hess, *Joshua*, p. 121; Longman, *Mercy*, p. 165.

that is, paradoxically, intimately related to קִרְשׁ and at the same time, its antithesis.<sup>113</sup>

In the case of Jericho, Yahweh is present with his people in a mighty way as they proceed into battle, signified first by the ark, and then by the other cultic components.<sup>114</sup>

The mountain demarcation at Sinai (Exod 19: 23) is paralleled in Josh 6 by the ark's being cordoned off by priests and armed guards (6:8-9). Yet, in Josh 6, the trumpet blast announces a divine encounter for the people of Jericho, not the Israelites.<sup>115</sup> When the walls fall, the inhabitants physically enter into the unmediated presence of Yahweh. Just as God's people must be consecrated when they encounter him on holy ground, so must the enemies he engages, only this consecration is of a severe, malevolent type, demanding their annihilation along with all they possess (though certain goods were permitted to pass into the sanctuary treasury, 6:19). The purpose of this disconcerting end to the enemies of God is to clear the way for the delivery of the Promised Land to Israel (5:6). The conquest of Jericho, then, is "a paradigm for the entire enterprise of the conquest...."<sup>116</sup> The end result for this paper is that the same five components occur in Joshua 6 as in Exodus 19 and Leviticus 25. The three passages that have the blowing of יֹבֵל trumpet appear to have a general type-scene as well. How that type-scene ties into the meta-narrative is the question.

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<sup>113</sup> C. Brekelmans, 'קִרְשׁ,' in E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds.) trans. M.E. Biddle, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997) 2:474-7; J. A. Naude, 'קִרְשׁ,' in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 2:276-7; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2418.

<sup>114</sup> Longman, *Mercy*, p. 167.

<sup>115</sup> M. Woudstra, *Joshua*, NICOT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1981) p. 110, suggests the יֹבֵל is a reminder of Exod 19, as does E. J. Hamlin, *Joshua: Inheriting the Land*, ITC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1983) p. 50.

<sup>116</sup> Nelson, *Joshua*, p. 89.

## Second Component Conclusions

Our survey of all three יובל events has revealed that its meaning lies beyond what any one definition can provide, and actually, יובל encompasses parts of all the proposed definitions. More importantly, by comparing all three of the יובל events in the OT, the shape and motifs of those events as type-scene conventions are clarified. The יובל type-scene is comprised of the following common elements:

The *blowing of a יובל*:

- 1) Signals a specific event determined by a *holy God*,
- 2) Who meets with a *prepared and consecrated people* (the time of meeting is also at his designation, as seen in all three passages),
- 3) In a *holy location* (spatial or temporal).
- 4) The יובל trumpet signals a *cultic event*, occurring because of
- 5) The divine intention to *deliver something specific* to his people.

In Israel's infancy, the יובל events at Sinai and Jericho describe the way they received redemption leading to their charter for national identity (at Sinai), and their land inheritance (at Jericho). The Jubilee, on a fifty-year cycle, is God's encounter with his people to deliver דרור, the restoration of covenant relationships *within the land of their inheritance* (25:2) as his people observe the charter he has given (25:18).

The definition of יובל as a type-scene that includes Sinai, Jericho and the Jubilee suggests a fluidity of those stories' themes with the larger biblical-theological themes of redemption and restoration. The יובל trumpet causes the people of Israel to reflect back to the day of covenant bestowal at Sinai, and also ahead to the promise of final restoration, most clearly seen in the typological fulfilment of the land promise at Jericho. In this manner, the meaning of the יובל trumpet brings definition to the theological core of the Jubilee.



### **The Fiftieth Year and the Eighth-Day:**

This third component also has biblical-theological ramifications. The problem I will explore here concerns the reason for the specific categorising of the Jubilee as the fiftieth year, as well as its theological import. The text of Leviticus 25:10,11, is quite clear that the Jubilee is the fiftieth year (שְׁנַת הַחֲמִישִׁים שָׁנָה). Despite this, interpretations are regularly presented that attempt to explain it otherwise. The first task, then, is to review the options for counting the years of a Jubilee cycle, after which we will address the possible meaning behind the Jubilee being a ‘fiftieth year.’

### **Jubilee: The 49<sup>th</sup> or 50<sup>th</sup> Year?**

The advent of Jubilee in the fiftieth year has been a particularly vexing problem for scholars, in no small part because the fiftieth year would necessitate two consecutive fallow years, the seventh sabbatical and the Jubilee.<sup>117</sup> A two-year fallow is generally regarded as a burden far too heavy for the Israelite economy and was, therefore, impossible.<sup>118</sup> For North, it was this assumed impossibility that provided justification for his search for an alternate explanation,<sup>119</sup> a search in which he is not alone.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Y. Amit, ‘The Jubilee Law-An Attempt at Instituting Social Justice,’ in H. G. Reventlow and Y. Hoffman (eds.), *Justice and Righteousness: Biblical Themes and Their Influence* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) p. 53; R. Kawashima, ‘The Jubilee, Every 49 or 50 Years?’ *Vetus Testamentum* 53.1 (2003) p. 117.

<sup>118</sup> Gnuse, *Jubilee*, pp. 43-48.

<sup>119</sup> North, *Sociology*, p. 115: “Though the Pentateuch was not meant as a textbook of economics, still if a universal fallow can be shown to have been economically impossible, then according to sound hermeneutic principles it is legitimate to seek some other explanation for the text.”

<sup>120</sup> An excursus by S. Wilkens in Hartley, *Leviticus*, pp. 434-6, lists five proposals (although see L. W. Casperson, ‘Sabbatical, Jubilee, and the Temple of Solomon,’ *Vetus Testamentum* 53.3 (2003) p. 287). For the broadest list of solutions, see North, *Sociology*, pp. 120-133. Cf. especially the ‘intercalary’ theory of S. B. Hoenig, ‘Sabbatical Years and the Year of Jubilee,’ *Jewish Quarterly Review* 59 (1969) pp. 222-236, followed by Wenham, and the ‘point of proclamation’ theory of S. A. Kaufman, ‘A Reconstruction of the Social Welfare Systems of Ancient Israel,’ in W. B. Barrick and J. R. Spencer (eds.) *In the Shelter of Elyon*, JSOTSup. 31 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1984) pp. 277-286, followed by Kleinig.

Hopkins and Milgrom have addressed the objection concerning the excessive burden of a double fallow. Hopkins points out that a seventh-year fallow would comprise a far too intense land usage and suggests that a biennial fallow was more realistic:

The stipulations of the sabbatical-year law, it was shown above, do not encompass a complete system of agricultural land use: fallowing was much more frequent than the one year out of seven which the law enjoins. With this observation we have avoided the pitfall which has trapped many scholars who, apparently in the absence of any appreciation of agriculture, have taken the sabbatical-year law to describe the totality of agricultural practice in ancient Israel. Such thinking leads, of course, to the quandary of how community farming so intensively could ever survive the absence of a full year's harvest. Talk about idealistic legislation begins and the search is on for evidence about when and if the sabbatical year was ever observed.<sup>121</sup>

Hopkins' construction is as follows: a farmer would split his land into two parcels and annually fallow one while working the other. The year immediately before the sabbatical, the farmer would work both parcels and then fallow them during the sabbatical. The added produce would help through the fallow year.<sup>122</sup> The Jubilee would require another year of fallow and would no doubt be taxing, but hardly an economic impossibility, especially given Yahweh's promise of prosperity (25:21). Milgrom strengthens this construct by contributing a short essay by one of his students whose farming experience attests to the reliability of oxen-ploughed land after a fallow.<sup>123</sup> Hopkins and Milgrom, together, provide a plausible and valuable alternative to the consensus regarding the economic impossibility of the Jubilee.

It would be unfair to imply that all objections to a fiftieth year flow from an inability to accept fallow implications. Another objection to the Jubilee being an actual fiftieth year stems from the difficulty in counting days and years in the OT

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<sup>121</sup> D. C. Hopkins, *The Highlands of Canaan* (Decatur, GA: The Almond Press, 1985) p. 200.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. p. 201.

<sup>123</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2249.

cultic calendar. Wilkins notes that counting difficulties exist with every calendar, not just the OT.<sup>124</sup> The solution suggested by these scholars is that it is likely that the writer(s) were counting inclusively, such as in the similar situation of the counting for Pentecost (where “...forty-nine exact days are counted as fifty days”<sup>125</sup>), and the 490 years of Daniel, which are apparently ten Jubilee cycles.<sup>126</sup>

Recently two scholars, Gane and Bergsma, apparently independent of each other, exhumed the interpretation of Rabbi Judah as to how the years were counted in the Jubilee cycle and, they have revived it to good health.<sup>127</sup> Judah had argued against his fellow rabbis, by insisting that the Jubilee must simultaneously be the fiftieth year of the previous Jubilee cycle and the first year of the following cycle, in order to not break the sabbatical cycle.<sup>128</sup> Bergsma employs this method and notes that the counting method of Firstfruits/Weeks includes the “day after the Sabbath” at the beginning (Lev 23:15) and at the end (v.16) to arrive at the count of fifty days.

Significantly, this scheme means the first and last days were festival days and, thus, the Jubilee cycle would start and finish on festival years—the Jubilee years themselves.<sup>129</sup> Gane concurs and, after presenting the pertinent data, writes:

We can conclude: Given an unbroken succession of sabbatical years in which the Jubilee year is a separate, full, 50<sup>th</sup> year following the seventh sabbatical year, the Jubilee Year must coincide with the first year of the following sabbatical cycle.<sup>130</sup>

There is a third counting based objection to an actual fiftieth year, which stems from the difficulty in interpreting 25: 20-22. That text appears to be addressing the one fallow of the seventh year. That would imply, as many commentators

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<sup>124</sup> In Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 436.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. He is referencing North’s argument.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, pp. 432-5; Bergsma, *Once Again*, p. 122.

<sup>128</sup> Amit, *Jubilee*, p. 53.

<sup>129</sup> Bergsma, *Once Again*, p. 123.

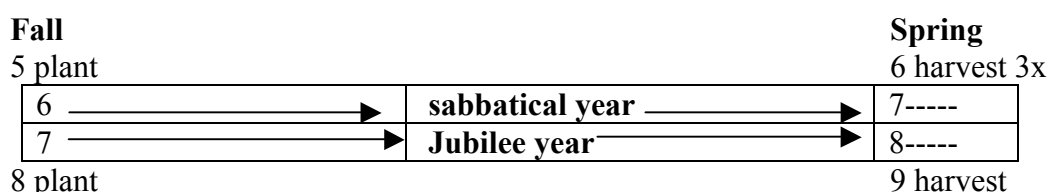
<sup>130</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 432.

understand it, that the seventh Sabbatical and the Jubilee overlap and are, indeed, the same year. Hartley champions this view:

By reason of the context, one would assume that this promise is for the year of Jubilee, but a closer look at its content indicates that it is in accord with a sabbatical year...While this promise speaks of needing food for three years, its primary concern is for food in the seventh year. The conclusive evidence that this promise does not think of two successive fallow years is the reference to sowing seed in the eighth year. If the Jubilee were the fiftieth year, that would be the eighth year, and sowing would not be allowed.<sup>131</sup>

This interpretation sees the three-years as referring to the Sabbatical year, where only one year (year seven) is a fallow year, followed by year eight, in which the land returns to normal agricultural production. Year nine, then, is when the first produce would come in. Hartley holds this as realistic,<sup>132</sup> but Noth detects a problem with the mention of the ninth year, in that either a spring calendar was intended, or there has been a textual addition.<sup>133</sup>

Recently, however, some scholars have revisited the issue (and Rabbi Judah's explanation) and make the point that the promises of vv. 18-22 actually address a two-year fallow. This second interpretation understands the three-years as referring to a consecutive, double fallow of the Sabbatical *and* Jubilee years.<sup>134</sup> Gane has produced the most workable solution to this calendrical problem, demonstrating that vv. 18-22 indeed discuss the double fallow of Sabbatical and Jubilee. His diagram is reproduced below:<sup>135</sup>



<sup>131</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 435.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid. p. 437.

<sup>133</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 188.

<sup>134</sup> It appears this was a prevalent view until North's questioning of it in *Sociology of the Biblical Jubilee*.

<sup>135</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 435.

There are three reasons why Gane's interpretation is preferable to the previous one. First, it makes the best sense of all the textual data within vv. 18-22. Second, it provides the best contextual 'flow' by erasing the awkward need to acknowledge that the text appears to be continuing its discussion of Jubilee, but has actually referred back, unannounced, to address the Sabbatical. Third, this interpretation intimately joins the ethical and theological statement of v. 18 (which is frequent earlier in Leviticus, cf. 18: 4-5; 19: 37; 20: 22<sup>136</sup>), to that of the Jubilee institution proper, strengthening the view that the theological content of the Jubilee is the primary concern.

If there is conclusive evidence regarding the interpretation of this passage (vv. 20-22), it is that presented by Milgrom. He has argued persuasively that there are compelling exegetical reasons to understand the nature of the Sabbatical as different from the nature of the Jubilee. His reasoning leads to the conclusion that the Sabbatical and the Jubilee are distinctly different types of years that cannot overlap.

Milgrom's primary observation is that the years do not apply to the same people. Whereas the Sabbatical falls on *all* within the land (including slaves, vv. 6-7), the Jubilee is only "*for you*," that is, only for the Israelites. An alien could work the land during the Jubilee, but could not during the Sabbatical. "Thus one cannot presuppose with many moderns...that the fiftieth year (jubilee) collapses into the forty-ninth (sabbatical)."<sup>137</sup> Milgrom's second observation flows from the first, and it is that the Jubilee legislation is never called a "Sabbath."<sup>138</sup> This creates a measure of tension in the text because of the obvious connection between the two years (as demonstrated in vv. 20-22), yet they are different. The tension of the Jubilee being

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<sup>136</sup> Bellinger, *Leviticus*, p. 150.

<sup>137</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2171.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid. p. 2166.

intimately connected to the Sabbatical and yet different is critical to understanding the reason for the fiftieth year. Finally, Milgrom notes that the ancients (referencing Josephus and Philo) viewed the two years as successive.<sup>139</sup>

### **The Eighth Day:**

It appears, then, that the combination of the explanations of the fiftieth year provided by Ramban<sup>140</sup> and Rabbi Judah plus the subsequent systematisation of that explanation by Bergsma and Gane plus the insights of Milgrom, best arrange and explicate both the data within vv. 20-22 and the issue of the forty-ninth or fiftieth year.

Behind the calendar issue, however, lays the weightier and more interesting question of why, precisely, does the Jubilee occurs on the actual fiftieth year? This question is particularly interesting because, as it was noted above by Hartley, if vv. 20-22 do speak of a double fallow, then the fiftieth year is actually the eighth year. This is significant, in that Milgrom made note that the eighth day, or here in Lev 25, the “eighth year”, is a frequent and remarkable phenomenon within the cultic system. He lists the numerous occurrences of the eighth day.<sup>141</sup>

The distinctiveness of the eighth-day is qualitative. It is a day that provides the culmination of the previous seven. Though it is intimately tied to the previous days

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid. p. 2250. **Josephus**, Ant. 3:281-82, “...and he ordained that they should do the same after seven times seven years, which in all are fifty years;” **Philo**, Laws, 2.110, “...he then puts together seven sevens of years, and so makes the fiftieth year an entirely sacred year, enacting with reference to it some ordinances of especial honour beyond those which relate to the ordinary years of the communication of property.”

<sup>140</sup> Ibid. p. 2183-4.

<sup>141</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 571, writes: “The eighth day is integrally connected with the previous seven. This holds true throughout the cult...” He then lists the following examples: circumcision (Lev 12:2-3); the firstling (Exod 22:20); eligibility for sacrifice (Lev 22:26-27); purification of the sanctuary (Lev 16:14-15, 18-19); the leper (14:8-10, 23); the zab (15:13-14); the Nazirite (Num 6:9-10); the dedication of Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 8:65 LXX); Ezekiel’s altar (Ezek 43:18-27); the duration of Sukkot (23:34-36, 39; Num 29:35); the Jubilee cycle (Lev 25:8-10).

(or years), it stands apart as the day of completion. Therefore, the eighth-day is usually seen as a kind of 7+1 occurrence, where the added day qualitatively ‘completes’ the previous seven. The eighth-day has been interpreted by many over the years as an image of restoration—even to the degree of symbolising the eschaton.

Where the sabbatic year had typically pointed only to a coming rest of the earth from the primeval curse, the jubilee, falling not on a seventh, but on an eighth year, following immediately on the sabbatic seventh, pointed also to the permanence of this blessed condition. It is the festival, be eminence, of the new creation, of paradise completely and forever restored.<sup>142</sup>

The importance of this component, then, lies in its potential to provide a way to integrate the Jubilee into the meta-narrative by its connections to the larger themes of biblical theology. As we will see below,<sup>143</sup> a large number of commentators (especially the Early Fathers) have interpreted the Jubilee along the lines of a Christian eighth-day re-creation; the question, of course, is whether linking the Jubilee to this image of the eighth day has any validity.

Many scholars have noted the various references, especially in Leviticus, to the “eighth-day.”<sup>144</sup> However, the connection of the eighth-day to the Jubilee invites investigation, especially since the year is not *explicitly* called an eighth-day (or year) event. Milgrom’s extensive list of eighth-day occurrences,<sup>145</sup> in conjunction with his study of the inauguration of the altar in Lev 9, led to his conclusion that the primary meaning of the eighth-day was to highlight the Tent and the Temple inaugurations as

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<sup>142</sup> S. H. Kellogg, *The Book of Leviticus*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1891) p. 513.

<sup>143</sup> See pp. 261-263.

<sup>144</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 209; Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 209; J. Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1986) p. 479; J. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1991) pp. 571, 592-5; Currid, *Leviticus*, pp. 191-2; North, *Sociology*, p. 122. See A.S. Kapelrud, ‘The Number Seven in Ugaritic Texts,’ *Vetus Testamentum* 18 (1968) p. 499 for a dismissal of the concept’s worth.

<sup>145</sup> See n. 142.

initiatory events rather than dedications.<sup>146</sup> This conclusion seems to fit well with what we have seen so far with the other components—the Jubilee is a cyclical, restorative event, initiating a new encounter with Yahweh. Milgrom’s research provides a sound basis (and impetus!) for further study.

There are essentially three different ways by which a cultic event can be considered of “eighth-day” quality. The **first** is by the explicit identification of the eighth-day (for example, as is seen with the restoration of communion with the *sancta* that the ritual purity sacrifices provided on the eighth-day, cf. 12: 3; 14:10, 23; 15:14, 29). While the text of Lev 25 does not explicitly call the Jubilee an eighth-day event, by adopting the interpretation of Rabbi Judah concerning vv. 20-22, I understand the text to come as close to an explicit naming of the Jubilee as an eighth day as possible when it equates the eighth year (v. 22) with the fiftieth, an equating that Hartley acknowledged (but does not accept) in the quote above.<sup>147</sup>

The **second** way to detect an eighth-day event, especially within the cultic calendar, is by the 7+1 counting that appears with the eighth-day or the extension of that counting. This counting and its extensions appear in Leviticus numerically, so that they occur on a 7x7+1 timetable.<sup>148</sup> For example, the Feast of Weeks and Jubilee both occur by a 7x7+1 counting method, days and years respectively.<sup>149</sup> The Feast of Tabernacles has a 7+1 format of days (23: 34-36). The blood sprinkling ritual of the Yom Kippur purification offering also follows a 7+1 pattern (16:14ff, cf. 4: 6).

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<sup>146</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 592.

<sup>147</sup> See above, n. 131.

<sup>148</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 592.

<sup>149</sup> See Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2163, where he argues that the Jubilee reckoning in v.8 is intentionally modelled on Lev 23:15, concerning the Feast of Weeks.



Finally, the conflation of the Passover/Unleavened Bread festivals results in a 1+7 event (23: 4-6).<sup>150</sup>

The **third** way of detecting an eighth-day event concerns Lev 25 and the Jubilee in particular. Simply put, it is the juxtaposition of the counting method with the chronological sequence of the Sabbatical and Jubilee. Lev 25 begins with the description of the Sabbatical year and then moves to the Jubilee. The literary sequence is obvious, but the meaning behind the concurrence is there for us to tease out (chapter four is devoted to this topic). What is certain is that by simply setting the two years side-by-side in the text and then stating that at the end of forty-nine years (7x7) the dramatic event of יובל begins a thematically similar fiftieth year, a 7x7+1 counting method is, at least, implied—it appears evident, even to those who, like Hartley, in practice regard the two years to be the same:

Seven is a most sacred number. Therefore, seven sevens is even more sacred. The forty-ninth year is a sabbatical year; its greater sacredness is celebrated in the fiftieth year, called יובל, the year of Jubilee (v.10).<sup>151</sup>

Alternative explanations for the connection between the two years might be that they are connected by the common topics of fallow and food provision, or the responsibility for the connection lies with a redactor. To do so would be a superficial answer, in my opinion, because it would fail to deal adequately with the data in the other two components already discussed.

It appears, then, that there is sufficient reason to continue exploring the Jubilee and the eighth-day concept. Using the first two levels of meaning, the *textual context* and the *covenant context*, the question is: what does the eighth-day mean throughout the law, and the OT, and how well does that meaning fit with what is known about the

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<sup>150</sup> This conflation is considered below.

<sup>151</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 434.

Jubilee? If, in Leviticus and the rest of the OT, we find conflict instead of similarity between the meaning of the eighth-day image and the meaning of the Jubilee, then it will be clear that the eighth-day as a Jubilee image cannot be helpful at the third level of meaning, the *canonical context*.

There are numerous occurrences of the eighth-day within Leviticus and several outside of it. There is the Nazirite re-commitment ceremony after corpse-defilement (Num 6: 9-12), the discussion of firstborn men and animals (Exod 22: 29-30), the inauguration of Solomon's Temple (1 Kgs 8: 66, 2 Chr 7: 8-10), the cleansing of the Temple by Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:17), and the consecration of Ezekiel's altar (Ezek 43: 26-27). These biblical examples are joined by extra-biblical occurrences in *Jubilees* 32: 27-29<sup>152</sup>; *1 Macc* 4: 56<sup>153</sup>; *2 Macc* 1: 9<sup>154</sup>; *Joseph and Asenath*<sup>155</sup>; *2 Enoch* 33:1-2,<sup>156</sup> and the entirety of *Parishah Eleven of Leviticus Rabbah*.<sup>157</sup>

Analysis of all these occurrences of the eighth day produces four distinct categories. First, and most important, there is an *inauguration* theme. Stories in this category describe either the initial use of the altar at the Tent/Temple complex or the later re-consecration of the altar for continued Temple service after a period of neglect or desecration. The blood sprinkling ritual of Yom Kippur fits into this category because it was a cleansing and re-setting of the altar. Second, there are several instances of the eighth-day in the *ritual purity* system. Certain unclean

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<sup>152</sup> O. S. Wintermute, 'Jubilees,' in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1985) p. 118;

<sup>153</sup> S. Johnson, '1, 2, 4 Maccabees,' in B. M. Metzger (ed.), *The Oxford Annotated Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) p. 231.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid. p. 263.

<sup>155</sup> C. Burchard, 'Joseph and Asenath,' in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1985) p. 187.

<sup>156</sup> F. I. Anderson, '2 Enoch,' in J. H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1 (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1985) p. 156.

<sup>157</sup> Neusner, *Leviticus Rabbah*, pp. 261-276.

conditions were fully remedied (i.e. the “clean” worshipper was allowed back into communion with the sanctuary) on the eighth-day.

Third, there is a category of *initiation*. For a baby boy or a sacrificial animal, there was a seven-day liminal period followed by either a ceremony (circumcision) or an acceptance (for sacrifice) on the eighth-day. Lev 8-9 would also fit this category because the priests were consecrated for seven days and then became functional on the eighth (the day of inauguration). Finally, there are the occurrences within the *cultic calendar*, mentioned above. Assuming the conflation of Passover/Mazzot,<sup>158</sup> all of the pilgrimage feasts were not only associated with the eighth-day, but also began and ended on a festival day.<sup>159</sup> The question, again, is whether the Jubilee, as a supposed 7x7+1 cyclical event, fits thematically into this category as an eighth-day occurrence. In the following pages, each of these four categories will be analysed and compared in an attempt to detect any theological similarity. Then we will assemble the findings and apply them to the OT paradigm of the Jubilee.

### **The Eighth Day and Inauguration:**

The category of inauguration occupies pride of place among the other three. This prominence is rooted in the fact that all the eighth-day occurrences are oriented around the Temple service, or cult. Logically, the inauguration of the cult (Lev 9) would have to take place prior to any subsequent eighth-day events that are dependent upon it. The importance of inauguration is confirmed at the opening of the altar in Lev 9, one of the most crucial of OT theophanies.

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<sup>158</sup>See C. E. Armerding, ‘Festivals and Feasts,’ in T.D. Alexander and D. W. Baker (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003) p. 303.

<sup>159</sup>Bergsma, *Once Again*, p. 123.

Noth has provided a non-theological explanation for this eighth-day event.<sup>160</sup> He interprets Exod 40:17 as dating the erection of the Tent to the first of Nisan. Immediately after that event, the book of Leviticus begins and it describes the sacrificial laws (Lev 1-7) and the seven-day consecration of Aaron and his sons (Lev 8). The eighth-day is then simple chronology—it is merely the eighth of Nisan, or “inauguration day.”<sup>161</sup> Noth’s explanation fits with his theory that originally chapters eight and nine circulated independent of each other. He credits P with conflating the two chapters, and P’s work is signalled by his trademark “dating formula” suggesting that “...the eighth-day is the first possible day for the real beginning of the cultus.”<sup>162</sup> But Milgrom detects a problem with Noth’s method because it conflicts with the rabbinic assertion that the Tent was erected on the twenty-third of Adar and inaugurated on the first of Nisan.<sup>163</sup>

Other commentators have made observations that disagree with Noth’s treatment of the eighth-day as a statement of mere chronology. Gane detects similarities between the Lev 9 fire theophany, the fire theophany at the Temple (2 Chr 7:1) and the fire that fell on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18: 38-39).<sup>164</sup> Gerstenberger discusses the similarity of the consecration ceremonies (cf. Exod 29: 43-46), of Solomon’s

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<sup>160</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 75-76. See also A. Ruwe, ‘The Structure of the Book of Leviticus in the Narrative Outline of the Priestly Sinai Story (Exod 19:1-Num 10:10),’ in R. Rendtorff and R. A. Kugler (eds.) *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) p. 61-65. He views 9:1, the eighth-day, as the structural pivot of the entire book.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. See R. Hayward, M. McNamara, and M. Maher (eds.) *The Aramaic Bible: Targum Neofiti I and Pseudo-Jonathan, Leviticus* (Collegeville, MN: Michal Glazier Books, 1994) p. 143.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. Cf. L. R. Bailey, *Leviticus* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987) p. 47 and Rashi, *Leviticus*, p. 35, for very similar suggestions.

<sup>163</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 571.

<sup>164</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 178. Cf. S. Tonstad, ‘The Limits of Power: Revisiting Elijah at Horeb,’ *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 19.2 (2005) p. 257, who argues for a deliberate series of allusions to tie the Horeb theophany of 1 Kings 19 to the theophany of Ex 19.

Temple and of David bringing the ark to Jerusalem in 1 Chr 15: 25-29.<sup>165</sup> Porter, while substantially agreeing with Noth, suggests that the eighth-day was significant, as evidenced by the cultic calendar occurrences of Weeks and Tabernacles.<sup>166</sup> In light of these corresponding occurrences, it appears that the ‘eighth-day’ carries more than just chronological meaning.

The primary purpose of Lev 9 is to describe the opening of the consecrated altar for cultic use on the eighth-day.<sup>167</sup> The inauguration was intended to prepare the way for the כבוד־יהוה to appear to the nation.<sup>168</sup> The appearance of the כבוד־יהוה is the signal to all Israel of the “complete acceptance [by God] of the new sanctuary as the main avenue for people to approach him.”<sup>169</sup> Ross suggests Lev 9 is significant because its pattern of worship corresponds to Exod 24 as a sequence aimed at producing communication with Yahweh.<sup>170</sup> The theological similarity of the two passages extends beyond the worship theme or theophanies—even beyond the fact that Exod 24 introduces legislation that delivers instructions about the ordination of the priesthood. At the very end of those instructions (Exod 28-29), Yahweh promises to consecrate the altar with his glory (as well as the entire sanctuary) in order that he might live among his people (Exod 29:45). The inauguration of the altar must be seen as a momentous event, sharing the same nature of the Sinai events.

Gane has described the Lev 9 inauguration as a “pulling out of all the stops.”<sup>171</sup> First, all of the prescribed sacrifices were offered on inauguration day, except for the reparation offering, which was only necessitated by specific

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<sup>165</sup> Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, 101-102.

<sup>166</sup> Porter, *Leviticus*, 71.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid.; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 571.

<sup>168</sup> Currid, *Leviticus*, p. 115; cf. Demarest, *Leviticus*, p. 94.

<sup>169</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 121.

<sup>170</sup> Ross, *Holiness*, p. 227.

<sup>171</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 180.

circumstances.<sup>172</sup> After that, Aaron gave the first of two blessings before he and Moses entered the Tent (vv.22-23). When the two emerged, they both gave a second blessing to the people and, at that point of the story, the glory of the Lord appeared.

There have been a number of speculations regarding the purpose of the two blessings and the entering of the Tent.<sup>173</sup> Noth's theory of conflation (above) posits that the purpose of the two blessings is not immediately discernable because the order of blessing/entry/blessing does not fit with the context of a fire theophany and therefore, the entire passage must be a conflation.<sup>174</sup> Tidball notes that the act of entering the Tent proclaims that while the altar is now open, access to the holy remains a highly restricted activity.<sup>175</sup> Hartley makes an interesting connection between Lev 9 and Exod 24, suggesting that entry to the Tent parallels the ascension of Sinai in Exod 24.<sup>176</sup> The most common connection identifies the double blessing in Lev 9 with the double blessing which frames the prayer of Solomon at the opening of the Temple in 1 Kings 8.<sup>177</sup> It is a logical step (and likely the correct one) to understand the prayers in these two stories as parallel to each other, both signalling communion with Yahweh and perhaps beseeching his appearance.<sup>178</sup> It may well be that the Lev 9 inauguration was the time when cultic authority was fully bestowed upon Aaron,<sup>179</sup> although the second blessing was administered by both he and Moses.

Immediately after that second blessing, the כבוד־יהוה appeared to the people. The word כבוד denotes "weightiness/heaviness" and the influence of this

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<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> See for example Hayward, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, p. 145.

<sup>174</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 81.

<sup>175</sup> Tidball, *Message*, 127. Cf. Hartley, *Leviticus*, 125.

<sup>176</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 124.

<sup>177</sup> Porter, *Leviticus*, p. 75; Budd, *Leviticus*, p. 147; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 588; Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 178.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 588.

<sup>179</sup> Porter, *Leviticus*, p. 71.

definition can be discerned in the common OT usage in relation to Yahweh when it speaks of his substantial “majesty or splendour.”<sup>180</sup> In the occurrences surrounding Sinai the phrase כבוד־יהוה seems to take on a technical sense, describing the manifest presence of Yahweh among his people.<sup>181</sup> The three elements that swirl around the various appearances of Yahweh are: his glory, the cloud, and a fiery presence.<sup>182</sup> Perhaps his glory necessitated a cloud and those two elements together formed a “glory cloud”<sup>183</sup> from which the fiery presence of God emerged (Exod 16:14).<sup>184</sup> The pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night (Exod 13: 21) was intended to indicate Yahweh’s presence. It may be possible to separate the three components, but the assumption that the כבוד־יהוה is a technical term releases us from the necessity to do so. The arrival of the cloud with glory and fire can only mean one thing in the Lev 9 context--Yahweh had arrived at the Tent!

The same mode of divine arrival had occurred before, at Sinai. Exod 19:16 records that the mountain was wrapped in a cloud with thunder and lightning and, then, Yahweh descended wreathed in fire (19:18). From Sinai, the Lord spoke his words to his people. However, for Westermann, the foundational theophany is not Exod 19 (which came from J and E), but Exod 24, which is P’s account, written in

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<sup>180</sup> C. Westermann, ‘כבוד,’ in E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds.) M.E. Biddle, trans. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997) 2:593.

<sup>181</sup> C. J. Collins, ‘כבוד,’ in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1997) 2:581, cf. Westermann, כבוד, p. 600.

<sup>182</sup> Budd, *Leviticus*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>183</sup> Currid, *Leviticus*, p. 121

<sup>184</sup> Levine, *Leviticus*, p. 58. Cf. Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 124.

parallel to Exod 19.<sup>185</sup> Westermann argues that the verbal, revelational theophany of Exod 24 gives shape to other events.<sup>186</sup>

While I demur as to his interpretation of the historicity of the two theophanies, the texts do have a parallel character. Hartley's equation of Tent entry and Sinai ascension has been noted,<sup>187</sup> and Milgrom sees their parallel nature as effectively making the Tent a "portable Sinai."<sup>188</sup> Exod 24 was also an inaugural event—when the Law was communicated (24:12), codified and the blood of the covenant administered (24: 8). Thus, the sacrificial system becoming operational in Lev 9 is juxtaposed with the theophany of Exod 24. Bellinger notes, "Through theophany, God completes the eight-day rite of ordination and inauguration of sacrifice at the tabernacle."<sup>189</sup> It is important to note that both of these inaugurations are presented in the Pentateuch's story as characteristic of *eighth-day* events and as such, they provide a substantial clue as to the nature of an eighth-day event—they are the culminations of certain events and preparations that had been planned long before.<sup>190</sup> The evidence concerning inauguration outside of the Pentateuch exhibits this same tendency.

The accounts of the inauguration of Solomon's Temple (1 Kgs 8:66, 2 Chr 7:8-10) contain substantial variants.<sup>191</sup> The MT of 1 Kgs 8:65 places the celebration's duration at a total of fourteen days (likely seven days for the feast and a second seven days for the inauguration) before Solomon sent the people home rejoicing on the

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<sup>185</sup> Westermann, **תנ"ך**, p. 600.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. p. 601.

<sup>187</sup> See n.176.

<sup>188</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 574.

<sup>189</sup> W. H. Bellinger, *Leviticus, Numbers* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001) p. 62.

<sup>190</sup> An observation made by C. T. R. Hayward, *Interpretations of the Name Israel in Ancient Judaism and Some Early Christian Writings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 144 that elucidates one of the aspects of inauguration.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. G. H. Jones, *1 and 2 Kings*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1984) 1.208; M. J. Selman, *2 Chronicles* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994) p. 335; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 594; and Hayward, *Israel*, pp. 141-2.



“eighth-day.” The LXX of 1 Kings limits the celebration to seven days (perhaps in dependence on 2 Chr 7<sup>192</sup>), while the Chronicler attempts to clear up the issue in 2 Chr 7:9 by explaining that the consecration of the altar came first, then the Festival (Tabernacles), followed by the solemn assembly of the eighth-day before the people were sent home.<sup>193</sup>

Despite all the textual issues, it is clear that the eighth-day is a significant, integral part of the Temple inauguration. The correspondences between this inaugural event and Lev 9 are not limited to the eighth-day. Sacrifices upon both altars were consumed by the rare event of fire falling from heaven (Lev 9:24; 2 Chr 7:1); the glory of the Lord appeared over his designated place of residence (Lev 9:23; 2 Chr 7:2); a double blessing framed a prayer/communion time (Lev 9:22-23; 1 Kgs 8:14-55) and the people prostrated themselves after the theophany expression (Lev 9:24; 2 Chr 7:3). And whereas the glory of Yahweh inhabited the Tent, it apparently did not manifest itself at the inauguration until after Moses and Aaron left the Tent (9:22). In the Temple event, none of the priests were able to enter the Temple because of God’s glory (2 Chr 7:2). This divine filling of the sacred space supports Milgrom’s assertion that the consuming fire came forth from the Tent to consume the offerings.<sup>194</sup> At any rate, the number of correspondences between the two events has inclined commentators to view the Tent inauguration as paradigmatic.<sup>195</sup> A portable Tent under a theocracy evolved into a permanent structure in a sacred city under the auspices of a divinely chosen monarch. The story development warrants two inaugurations.

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<sup>192</sup> See Jones, *1 Kings*, 1.208

<sup>193</sup> Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 594; Hayward, *Israel*, p. 142.

<sup>194</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 590.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid; Porter, *Leviticus*, p. 75.

After the Temple inauguration, eighth-day events focus on cultic re-orientation rather than inauguration. Elijah's experience on Mt. Carmel (1 Kgs 18) is a cultic re-orientation because that theophany cannot be separated from the one immediately following at Horeb in chap. 19.<sup>196</sup> In the Horeb theophany, Yahweh reveals his detailed plans to re-orient Israel (vv. 15-18). The event on Mt. Carmel was occasioned by Ahab's religious apostasy (1 Kgs 16: 29-34) and the event's purpose was to re-orient Israel, who had become torn between Baal and Yahweh, back to a pure Yahweh worship (cf. 18:21, 24, 37). While the theophany must be considered to be an authentication of Yahweh and Elijah, it employs the formal elements of the inaugurations to accomplish re-orientation.

The cleansing of the Temple by Hezekiah (2 Chr 29:3-4) is a story of Ahaz's corrupt regime coming to its end and Judah's re-orientation to Yahweh through the re-opening of the Temple and the re-commissioning of the priests and Levites. In this account, the courtyards were cleansed through an eight-day ritual process, after which the Temple precincts were cleansed via another eight-day process (29:17). Following these cleansings, a large celebration reminiscent of the Temple inauguration occurred (29:20-36). The re-orientation and re-consecration of the existing cult under Hezekiah did not require a theophany.

The book of Nehemiah records a famous event similar to Hezekiah's effort to cleanse the Temple as it brings about reform and the re-orienting call to hear and obey the "Book of the law of Moses" (8:1f), especially as it concerns the Feast of Tabernacles. The Law was read, and the Feast was kept, followed by a solemn assembly on the eighth-day. The eighth-day brought about a re-orientation within the cultic setting. This is the second passage (with the inauguration of Solomon's

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<sup>196</sup> Tonstad, *Elijah*, p. 254.

Temple) that the eighth-day is also the final day of Tabernacles (עצרת), as legislated by Lev 23:36 and Num 28:35.<sup>197</sup>

In many of these stories, the categories of inauguration and cultic calendar become entwined. C.T.R. Hayward has made an important observation from *Jubilees*. In *Jubilees* 32:26, the patriarch Jacob observes the eighth-day of *Sukkot* and, by implication, receives his name change that same night (32:16). Importantly, Hayward's conclusion of this event is that the eighth-day is a "...*formal completion* of qualifications necessary for the house of Jacob to be constituted under God's rule,"<sup>198</sup> but, at the same time, Jacob's name change "...marks the formal beginning of a new phase in the life of the chosen people."<sup>199</sup>

The point to be seen in all this biblical data and before a brief look at some extra-biblical data, is that elements of completion, new beginning (or re-orientation), and a consecrated people are parts of the paradigm of inauguration that consistently surface in stories that combine the eighth-day with Temple re-dedication. For instance, Ezek 43:26-27 tells of the altar being consecrated and thus made functional on the eighth-day.

Outside of the canon proper, the Maccabean account of the eighth-day cleansing and rededication of the sanctuary is particularly striking. During the Seleucid's three-year regime, the altar and sanctuary had been defiled. After leading the nation to independence, Judas decided to commemorate the 25<sup>th</sup> of *Chislev* as the day of consecration, exactly three years after defilement.<sup>200</sup> Similarly, the city of

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. Hayward, *Israel*, pp. 142-3.

<sup>198</sup> Hayward, *Israel*, p. 143.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid, p. 144.

<sup>200</sup> V. Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1999) p. 220.

Jerusalem had been defiled by attempts at Jewish Hellenisation.<sup>201</sup> Upon retaking the city, the destruction of a corrupt regime was followed by purification and a new beginning for the re-oriented cult. Some scholars see the template from Hezekiah's Temple cleansing as providing the pattern for Maccabees.<sup>202</sup> VanderKam, however, has noted that *2 Macc* 10:6 places the Hanukkah story and the Feast of Tabernacles in close association.<sup>203</sup>

Thus, it appears the eighth-day of Tabernacles supplies the event around which the Maccabean stories pivot. VanderKam points out that *1 Maccabees* does not stress the same link between Tabernacles and Hanukkah but instead highlights the reinstatement of the altar. *2 Maccabees* acknowledges the importance of the altar (1:18; 2:19; 10:3) but then emphasises the purification of the sanctuary.<sup>204</sup> *2 Macc* 1:9 presents what seems to be a conflation of Tabernacles and Hanukkah as it admonishes to "...keep the feast of booths in the month of Chislev...." More telling than this is the passage from *2 Macc* 2:8-12:

And then the Lord will disclose these things, and the glory of the Lord and the cloud will appear, as they were shown in the case of Moses, and as Solomon asked that the place should be specially consecrated. It was made clear that being possessed of wisdom Solomon offered sacrifice for the dedication and completion of the temple. Just as Moses prayed to the Lord, and fire came down out of heaven and devoured the sacrifices, so also Solomon prayed, and the fire came down and consumed the whole burnt offerings. And Moses said, "They were consumed because the sin offering had not been eaten." Likewise Solomon also kept the eight days.<sup>205</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> J. J. Scott Jr., *Jewish Backgrounds of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995) p. 81.

<sup>202</sup> Johnson, *2 Maccabees*, p. 231; J. C. Rylaarsdam, 'Dedication, Feast of,' in G.A. Buttrick (ed.) *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) 1.812.

<sup>203</sup> J. C. VanderKam, 'Dedication, Feast of,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 2.124

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Johnson, *2 Maccabees*, p. 266.

This passage appears in a letter to Aristobulus, which explains the new festival and its connection to the Temple rededication of Nehemiah.<sup>206</sup> The text clearly links the theophany of Moses with that of Solomon as common events of consecration, dedication, and, significantly, the eighth-day (v.12). The writers appear to understand the eighth-day as one of Tabernacles (עֲצֵרֶת) and they view Tabernacles, the theophanies, and the new festival (Hanukkah) as all sharing the same divine source, illustrated by having the eighth-day in common. The writers of *1 and 2 Maccabees* have seen the importance of the eighth-day and have correctly addressed it as a multi-faceted inauguration. The very same elements discussed in the biblical texts drive this story: altar re-instatement, Tabernacles, the eighth-day, and purification.

A very important piece of evidence comes from Parashah Eleven of *Leviticus Rabbah*, a rabbinic commentary on Leviticus.<sup>207</sup> Here, in a complex section of rabbinic exegesis, the eighth-day of Lev 9 prompts an exegetical method (which Neusner describes as “simply juxtaposing clauses”<sup>208</sup>) in a series of equations involving Prov 9:1-6, Lev 9 and four other topics. The seven pillars of Proverbs 9:1 are first likened to the seven days of creation (XI:1), then to the seven years of Gog in an eschatological discussion (XI: II), thirdly, they are likened to the seven scrolls of Torah (XI:III), and finally to the seven days of consecration of the Tent (XI:IV). The equating of the seven pillars in the first series with creation and then with the sacrificial system in the final series (both are equated by quoting Lev 9:1 concerning the eighth-day) is a firm statement of the inauguration concept. However, there is a further element to explore.

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<sup>206</sup>Ibid. p. 264

<sup>207</sup>Neusner, *Leviticus Rabbah*, pp. 261-276.

<sup>208</sup>Ibid. p. 263.

*Leviticus Rabbah* XI:VI employs several lines of reasoning to establish that the eighth-day of Lev 9 constituted proof of the superseding of Moses and his work by Aaron. This rare denigration of Moses is occasioned by the imperative of elevating the cult. As Neusner comments, the sacrificial cult is the “counterpart and complement to the world of creation”<sup>209</sup> and therefore, even Moses himself must be passed by in favour of Aaron the high priest. Moses had worn the priestly garments for seven days (in Lev 8) assuming the high priesthood was his, but he never received the affirmation of the theophany (XI:VI:2). The writer also teaches that Moses’ early, sevenfold rejection of his mission to Egypt (cf. Ex 4) prompted the conscription of Aaron and, further, that Moses’ reticence was the cause of his punishment of rejection (XI:VI:3). Likewise, Moses spent seven days requesting to cross the Jordan, but these petitions were rejected by God (XI:VI:3). Aaron alone would experience the heights of the eighth-day. The thought of *Leviticus Rabbah*, completed around A.D. 400-425 by Neusner’s estimation,<sup>210</sup> fits comfortably into the eighth-day concept. The eighth-day marks the inauguration of the sacrificial system, which is the completion of creation itself and the necessary “next step.” This step is so revolutionary that even Moses is superseded by the new system. *Leviticus Rabbah* recognised the significance of the eighth-day and its link to a new beginning.

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid. p. 265.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid. p. 5. This date is disputed however. E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, trans. J. Macpherson (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) div. 1, vol. 1, p. 148 proposes, on the authority of Zunz, a compilation date in the middle of the seventh century. H.L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (New York: Meridian Books, Inc., 1959) pp. 211-212, points out that Zunz held this date because he thought *Pesiktha Kahana* was dependent on *Leviticus Rabbah* (and other writings). Other scholars (Lauterbach, Theodor) hold that dependence is the opposite from Zunz, making *Leviticus Rabbah* even later. B.L. Visotzky, *Fathers of the World: Essays in Rabbinic and Patristic Literatures* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1995) p. 93n.1, dates the book closer to Neusner, placing it somewhere in the fourth to sixth centuries and offers a full bibliography of those holding to that date.

Lastly, a passage from *2 Enoch* contains explicit eighth-day content. *2 Enoch* explicates a brief passage in Genesis, which covers the years from Enoch to the Flood (Gen 5:21-32).<sup>211</sup> The eighth-day is addressed in 33:1-2:

On the eighth-day I likewise appointed, so that the eighth-day might be the first, the first created of my week, and that it should revolve in the revolution of 7000; <| so that the 8000|> might be in the beginning of a time not reckoned and unending, neither years, nor months, nor weeks, nor days, nor hours < like the first day of the week, so also that the eighth-day of the week might return continually>.<sup>212</sup>

While the idea of the eighth-day signalling an entrance into unmeasured time would provide a crowning touch to the study of inauguration, this passage suspiciously sounds as though it has been tampered with by a Christianising force. The concept of the eighth-day and the first-day being the same day in a recurring cycle is a theme that was quickly interpreted by the early church in terms of creation/re-creation related to the resurrection of Jesus. On the other hand, it has been noted above that the festivals of the cultic calendar both began and ended on special days, either a festival or solemn assembly, and this patterned nature may have influenced this passage in *2 Enoch*. The fact, however, that *2 Enoch* is notoriously difficult to date and has been suspected of containing other Christian interlocutions, establishes the case for caution.<sup>213</sup> The text is ancient enough to function as an important witness to the inauguration theme though it cannot be said with certainty to present an ancient Jewish perspective on the eighth-day.

**In summary of the matter of the inauguration** of the altar and the sacrificial cult on the eighth-day, there is a consistent paradigm throughout the surveyed biblical and extra-biblical texts. The paradigm contains several elements. **First**, inauguration

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<sup>211</sup>Anderson, *2 Enoch*, p. 91.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid. p. 156.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid. pp. 94-5. Anderson thinks the book is early, and Jewish. He does see a possible range as broad as pre-Christian to the late Middle Ages.

includes the idea of a theophany, or minimally, of an extraordinary divine activity. As examples, a theophany accompanies both the Tent and Temple occurrences; Jacob's name was changed during a vision in *Jubilees*, and *Leviticus Rabbah* presents the theophany of Lev 9 as the ultimate expression of God's approval. **Second**, the paradigm of inauguration not only concentrates on a new beginning but also upon the completion of an old economy. There are some stories that appear to follow the paradigm (such as Hezekiah's Temple cleansing or the story of the Maccabees) but are, in point of fact, of lesser consequence. In these stories, the completion of an old economy is not a crisis point, but, rather, it takes the form of the Temple cleansed from previous defilement. Similarly, the new beginning is diminished in these secondary stories to a re-dedication of the Temple, which then provides a re-orientation of the cultic system. Without fail, these events are a re-orienting of Israel's relationship with Yahweh. **Third**, the focus of the activity of inauguration and rededication is a relationship with Yahweh, usually revolving around the altar and sanctuary.

The inauguration theme enlightens the Jubilee as an eighth-day event, in that the fiftieth year is a cultic event that is the culmination of the previous seven sabbaticals; in that year comes the reorientation, through release and redemption, of Israel's relationship to Yahweh within the land he has given them. The inauguration aspect dominates the theme of the eighth-day—the following aspects are secondary because they presuppose a properly functioning cult as their basis.

### **The Eighth Day and Ritual Purity:**

The purpose in looking, in a modicum of detail, at the ritual purity system, is that the completing/inaugurating emphasis of the eighth-day is also seen in this area of legislation. The legislation here does not extend into other biblical and extra-



biblical texts anything like the pervasive inaugural theme. Nonetheless, the ritual purity laws demonstrate a close adherence to the themes we have seen so far in the Jubilee components, which lends further support that the eighth-day is a biblical theme *into which* the Jubilee properly fits.

Within the ritual purity system, there are three unclean conditions that render the worshipper temporarily unable to function properly in relation to society and the sancta. The rectification of these specific conditions comes through a three-stage purification process,<sup>214</sup> which culminates in the offering of atoning sacrifices on the eighth-day (Lev 14:10; 15:14, 29; Num 6:10). The first conditions is the זב and זבה of Lev 15, generally considered to be those suffering from genital discharges;<sup>215</sup> second is the מצרע or leper<sup>216</sup> from Lev 13-14; and third, the corpse-defiled Nazirite from Num 6. These cases represent the main concerns of the ritual purity system: blood, semen, leprosy, and death.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>214</sup>Currid, *Leviticus*, p. 162; Budd, *Leviticus*, p. 205; F. H. Gorman Jr., 'Priestly Rituals of Founding: Time, Space and Status,' in M. P. Graham, W. P. Brown and J.K. Kuan (eds.) *History and Interpretation: Essays in Honour of John H. Hayes* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993) p. 48; D. P. Wright, 'Holiness,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 3:247.

<sup>215</sup>J. M. Norris, 'Clean and Unclean,' in G.A. Buttrick (ed.) *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) vol. 1, p. 644.

<sup>216</sup>Although leprosy is an imprecise term for all the skin conditions, it will be employed here due to its continued use as an umbrella term. Cf. J. Wilkinson, 'Leprosy and Leviticus: The Problem of Description and Identification,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 30 (1977) 153-69. However, see R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969) p. 608; cf. idem 'Leper, Leprosy,' in G.W. Bromiley (gen. ed.) *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1986) 3:103-6: for a discussion on Lev 13 and Hansen's disease.

<sup>217</sup>J. Milgrom, 'Rationale for Cultic Law: The Case of Impurity,' *Semeia* 45 (1989) p.106; see also idem, 'The Rationale for Biblical Impurity,' *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 22 (1993) p. 109.

This three-stage purification process is best viewed as a “ritual of restoration”<sup>218</sup> whereby the worshipper was restored to the original state enjoyed before the crisis of impurity.<sup>219</sup> The process is a reversal of the defiling. Each of the impure conditions conforms to the following framework of restoration: Initially, there was the critical stage of *severe impurity*. The worshipper suffered ritual impurity and was highly restricted in both the social and sacred realms. All parties involved in the cleansing process (usually priests) were protected from the impurity. Then, at the end of the severe stage, a second transitional, or *liminal stage* was entered. At the end of this stage, set at seven days (14:8; 15:13, 28; Num 6:9, 19:11), the worshipper was declared טָהוֹר and was healed/cleansed and therefore able to fully function within the camp (14:9; 15:13, 28; Num 6:9).<sup>220</sup> Completion of this stage, however, did not allow the worshipper back into contact with the *sancta*; faithful worshippers relied on the third stage to end their estrangement from the sacred realm. On the eighth day, they offered sacrifices at the entrance to the tent of meeting, thereby completing the *final stage*, which resulted in their restoration to a state of religious equilibrium, to a re-established relationship to Yahweh, and to the sanctuary.<sup>221</sup> The worshipper was again pronounced טָהוֹר, but this time it announced that their original *religious* state had been attained through the atoning sacrifices. The three stages of restoration for these conditions may be portrayed graphically:

Genital Discharges—Lev 15		
Completed Stage:	זָב	זָבָה
1. Severity	v. 13: discharge cleansed	v. 28: discharge cleansed
2. Transition	v. 13: clean after seven days, laundry and ablutions	v. 28: clean after seven days

<sup>218</sup> Gorman, *Priestly Rituals*, p.47.

<sup>219</sup> Wright, *Holiness*, p. 247.

<sup>220</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 963.

<sup>221</sup> Walton, *Equilibrium*, p. 299.

3. Restoration	vv. 14-15: eighth-day ‘atoning sacrifices’	v. 29: eighth-day ‘atoning sacrifices’
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**צָרַעַת or ‘Leprosy’—Lev 14:1-20**

<u>Completed Stage:</u>	<u>הַמִּצְוָה</u>
1. Severity	vv. 2-8: leprosy cleansed; two birds ritual; laundering clothes; shaving hair; bathing; may enter the camp but must stay outside of tent for seven days.
2. Transition	vv. 4-8: clean after seven days; shaving of specified body hair; laundering clothes; bathing.
3. Restoration	vv. 10-20: after the eighth day sacrifices which included: guilt, elevation, and grain offerings; blood and oil manipulation; the atoning sacrifices of purification and burnt offerings

**נָזִיר or the ‘Nazirite’—Num 6:1-21**

<u>Completed Stage:</u>	<u>נָזִיר</u>
1. Severity	v. 9: defilement nullifies the vow and renders one unclean
2. Transition	v. 9: seven-day period following the dictates of Num 19 re. corpse defilement. Shaving of the head on the seventh day when the person becomes clean
3. Restoration	v. 10: eighth day atoning sacrifices and a beginning again of the time vowed

The formal consistency surrounding these terminal sacrifices invites some observations, notwithstanding the numerous questions about the overall ritual purity system.<sup>222</sup> The frequency of the seven-day liminal period draws attention not only to the role of seven as the number of completeness, but also suggests the completion of the creation in seven days.<sup>223</sup> “Seven-days” appears throughout the ritual purity system to denote the unit of time necessary for movement between conditions within the system (13: 4, 5, 31, 33; 15:19, 24) to occur. The corpse-contaminated purification

<sup>222</sup> For a survey of scholarship and the logic of the system, see J. M. Sprinkle, ‘The Rationale of the Laws of Clean and Unclean in the Old Testament,’ *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 43.4 (2000) pp. 637-657.

<sup>223</sup> Bellinger, *Leviticus*, p. 87.

ceremony, for example, was a seven-day event that utilised water from a previously enacted purification offering for sprinkling.<sup>224</sup> At the end of that seven-day period, full restoration was achieved without eighth-day sacrifices. The question must then be asked, can it be that the seven-day liminal period provided both the necessary מטהר and full restoration—were the seven days a complete re-creation, in imitation of the original week? If so, are the sacrifices on the next, or eighth-day, merely be a chronological mention.<sup>225</sup>

There are three reasons that suggest that the seven-day unit was not the defining time. First, the worshipper had not been brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting at the end of the seven-day second stage. Nowhere is the second stage seen as producing contact with the *sancta*, therefore, the condition of these worshippers must be considered incomplete. Second, sacrificial expiation is unquestionably a necessary part of the process of restoration and although מטהר was announced at the end of the seventh-day, it must be considered as provisional,<sup>226</sup> awaiting the eighth-day. Finally, the clarity provided by the laws of the parturient and the Nazirite show the concern of the three-stage purification process to be that of restoration with Yahweh—and that goal is not attained until the eighth-day.

**In summary of the ritual purity topic**, it appears that the eighth-day is clearly portrayed as a time of new beginnings and complete restoration within the ritual purity system.<sup>227</sup> Restoration and new beginnings are decidedly theological things, because their ultimate goal is the re-establishment of a clear, harmonious

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<sup>224</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 663; J. Milgrom, 'The Paradox of the Red Cow (Num XIX),' *Vetus Testamentum* 31 (1981) p.70; Wenham, *Numbers*, p.147.

<sup>225</sup> Rashbam, *Leviticus*, p. 71, in particular anticipated this question.

<sup>226</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 247.

<sup>227</sup> Kellogg, *Leviticus*, p. 319; Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 209; Currid, *Leviticus*, p.165; Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 209. Wenham regards the re-integration of the eighth-day as an actual reincorporation into the covenant.

relationship with Yahweh. Therefore, in accord with what has been seen previously of the eighth-day, the טָהָר status produced at the end of the liminal, seven-day second stage culminates the restoration process and, on the eighth-day, the כִּפּוּר activities of the third stage results in a newly restored encounter with Yahweh.<sup>228</sup>

### **The Eighth Day and Initiation**

Initiation is the moniker for another facet of the eighth-day concept that appears to also have at its core a completing/inaugurating encounter with Yahweh. The investigation here will focus on two passages within Leviticus. First, in 22:27, the regulation concerning sacrificial animals is found:

When an ox or a sheep or a goat is born, it shall remain for seven days with its mother, and from the eighth-day onwards it shall be acceptable as the LORD's offering by fire.

And second, the regulations of childbirth, circumcision and the parturient occur in 12:2-3:

If a woman conceives (תִּזְרֶינָה) and bears (וַיֵּלֶדָהּ) a male child (זָכָר), she shall be ceremonially unclean for seven days; as at the time of her menstruation she shall be unclean. On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

Both passages exhibit an interest in the newborn as well as its mother. Likewise, the time for mother and child to be together is set at the sacred number of seven days. After that time, an eighth-day cultic 'change' occurred.<sup>229</sup> From the eighth-day, the animal was then eligible for the sacrificial system. For the child, his eighth-day circumcision made him acceptable to the covenantal system.

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<sup>228</sup> B. J. Schwartz, 'The Bearing of Sin in the Priestly Literature,' in D.P. Wright, D.N. Freedman and A. Hurvitz (eds.) *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1995) p. 3; N. Zohar, 'Repentance and Purification: The Significance and Semantics of תַּטְאוּת in the Pentateuch,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 107.4 (1988) pp. 609-618.

<sup>229</sup> Scherman, *Chumash*, p. 609, explains that the ritual can only be done during daylight of the eighth-day.

There are a plethora of explanations as to why an animal must remain with its mother seven days. Some attempts, such as the argument that an animal requires seven days of development before eligibility, simply do not suffice.<sup>230</sup> A sacrificial system capable of accommodating a spectrum of victims from pigeons to bulls has the inherent flexibility to deal with a young animal. Other explanations revolve around the humanitarian or compassionate nature of the law,<sup>231</sup> or fertility rites (pagan or otherwise),<sup>232</sup> or the necessity of seven days to determine the acceptability of the animal for sacrifice.<sup>233</sup> The latter suggestion derives credibility from the context, which provides guidelines for the determination of the acceptable food gifts.<sup>234</sup>

Milgrom points out that the passage regulating sacrificial acceptability (22:17-30) contains seven uses of the root **קָבַץ**.<sup>235</sup> That term, “Acceptable,” is also a description used of the burnt and non-expiatory sacrifices.<sup>236</sup> If there is a motif throughout the legislation of sacrificial acceptability signalled by a pronounced vocabulary use, then it may be assumed that ‘time’ is an entity that can become a powerful defect that excludes an animal that does not have enough of it (seven days). Time also appears to be the issue at hand in the following two restrictions, vv. 28-30.<sup>237</sup>

*Leviticus Rabbah* XXVII:X teaches that while the seven days are necessary for the examination of the animal, the real reason for the eighth-day is to ensure that

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<sup>230</sup> Bellinger, *Leviticus*, p. 135; Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 331.

<sup>231</sup> Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 382; Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 331; Ross, *Holiness*, p. 393; Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 296. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1883 for refutation.

<sup>232</sup> Porter, *Leviticus*, p. 177; Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 163; Currid, *Leviticus*, p. 296.

<sup>233</sup> Neusner, *Leviticus Rabbah*, p. 478.

<sup>234</sup> ‘Food gift,’ or simply ‘gift’ is a better translation for **תְּשִׁיבָה** than ‘offering by fire’ (NRSV). See Hartley, *Leviticus*, pp. 13-14 Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 57; and Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, pp. 161-2 for lengthy arguments.

<sup>235</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, 149.

<sup>236</sup> Budd, *Leviticus*, 46.

<sup>237</sup> ibn Ezra, *Leviticus*, p. 117.

no matter the day the animal was born, at least one Sabbath will be spent with its mother before becoming eligible for sacrifice.<sup>238</sup> Currid offers a similar possibility, suggesting that the seven days are a type of creation week that the animal lives out before eligibility.<sup>239</sup> If time is a factor for disqualification added to the twelve physical requirements of a sacrificial animal given in 22: 22-25, an interesting parallel ensues.<sup>240</sup> The physical qualifications for a priest serving at the altar are given in 21:16-24 and closely parallel the qualifications for the sacrificial animal.<sup>241</sup> However, the eight-day time restriction is added to the animals' requirements whereas it is missing within the priests' restrictions, presumably because it was satisfied long before in his infancy.

The juxtaposition of animal initiation and circumcision has often been noted and commentators have suggested that the connection forms the rationale behind the seven-day requirement in 22:27.<sup>242</sup> Kleinig comments, "Like the seven days before the circumcision of a male child in 12:2-3, this was the normal time for ritual transition from one state to another."<sup>243</sup> The similarities between the passages reach their zenith in the common cultic 'transition' of acceptability to Yahweh. The passage in *Leviticus Rabbah* states the matter in clearest terms:

Said the Holy One, blessed be he, 'You will not make an offering before me until a Sabbath shall have passed over [the animal that is to be offered], for seven days cannot pass without a Sabbath, and [for the same reason] the rite of circumcision [takes place on the eighth day] so that it cannot take place without the advent of a Sabbath.

"And from the eighth day on it shall be acceptable [as an offering by fire to the Lord] (Lev 22:27)."

Said R. Isaac, "A rule is written with regard to man, and the same rule is

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<sup>238</sup> Neusner, *Leviticus Rabbah*, p. 478-79.

<sup>239</sup> Currid, *Leviticus*, 296.

<sup>240</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, 359.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, pp. 1876-77

<sup>242</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 362; Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 382 n.4; ibn Ezra, *Leviticus*, 117.

<sup>243</sup> Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 479.

written with regard to a beast:

The rule with regard to a man: 'And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin will be circumcised' (Lev 12:3).

The same rule with regard to a beast: 'And from the eighth day on, it shall be acceptable.' (Lev 22:27).<sup>244</sup>

Here the argument is that the eighth-day event constitutes the dividing line between divine acceptance and rejection. Yet, the eighth-day is still seen as subordinate to the Sabbath rather than forming a culmination and inauguration. The tension surrounding the completeness of a seven-day time unit and the importance of the ensuing eighth-day is seen again, but this time in the interpretation of circumcision.<sup>245</sup>

**In summary**, initiation encompasses both man and beast and concerns itself with yet another eighth-day cultic encounter with Yahweh. The natural relationship with the mother is severed by the completion of sacred time (the completion of seven days) and the eighth-day then 'inaugurates' the subject into a relationship with the sacred.<sup>246</sup>

### **The Eighth Day and the Cultic Calendar**

One of the most difficult tasks in biblical studies is the attempt to comprehend the formation of the calendar and harmonise all of its respective issues.<sup>247</sup> In terms of a literary context, the calendar remains stubbornly resistant to incorporation, at present seeming to fit better in a theory of historical development. Therefore, while the cultic calendar is a field that extends far beyond the borders of my topic, the

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<sup>244</sup> Neusner, *Leviticus Rabbah*, p. 479.

<sup>245</sup> Cf. R. G. Hall, 'Circumcision,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992) 1:1025-31; T. R. Schreiner, 'Circumcision,' in G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, D. G. Reid (eds.) *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993) pp. 137-39.

<sup>246</sup> This discussion could be expanded by consideration of the firstborn.

<sup>247</sup> See the recent works by J. Northcote, 'The Schematic Development of Old Testament Chronography: Towards an Integrated Model,' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 29.1 (2004) pp. 3-36; P. Guillaume, 'Tracing the Origin of the Sabbatical Calendar in the Priestly Narrative (Genesis 1 to Joshua 5),' *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 5 (2004-2005) pp. 1-19.



eighth-day is noticeable in the three  $\text{ליל}$  festivals, which require a pilgrimage to the sanctuary (Exod 23:14-17).<sup>248</sup>

Each of these three feasts displays evidence of the eighth-day concept. For example, the feast of Weeks (or Pentecost) is configured on a fifty-day counting (Lev 23:16). The exact day the counting begins has been longstanding and important crux,<sup>249</sup> but it is clear that fifty days are to be counted.<sup>250</sup> The Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles) in Lev 23:33-36 is also clearly influenced by the eighth-day because it is  $\text{עצרת}$ , a separate festival added onto the end of the seven days, making it an eight-day event.<sup>251</sup> Both these pilgrimage feasts revolve around an eighth-day reckoning.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread, or *Mazzot* (Lev 23:6-8), is not as simple. Wagenaar has provided a clear view of the matter.<sup>252</sup> The pre-priestly calendars do not specify on which day of the month *Abib* that the feast should begin (Exod 23; Exod 34; Deut 16). Ezek 45:18-25 does specify the date of Passover as the fourteenth day of the seventh month, but the relationship between Passover and *Mazzot* is still unclear (as are the other calendar texts; cf. 45:21 and v. 25).<sup>253</sup> It is the Holiness Code (some stratum of which is the source of the Passover rendition in Exod 12<sup>254</sup>), Wagenaar says, that lifts the ambiguity and explains the relationship between the two

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<sup>248</sup> H. L. Bosman, ' $\text{ליל}$ ,' in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 2:20-21.

<sup>249</sup> J. A. Wagenaar, 'Passover and the First Day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the Priestly Festival Calendar,' *Vetus Testamentum* 54.2 (2004) pp. 250-268; G. Hepner, 'The Morrow of the Sabbath is the First Day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23, 15-17) *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 118 (2006) pp. 389-404; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 2056-2063.

<sup>250</sup> Bergsma sees Weeks as the timing pattern the Jubilee is built on. See Bergsma, *Jubilee*, pp. 237-238; Bergsma, *Once Again*, pp. 121-125.

<sup>251</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2028-2032.

<sup>252</sup> J. A. Wagenaar, 'Post-Exilic Calendar Innovations,' *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 115 (2003) pp. 3-24.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid. p. 4

<sup>254</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 1974.

festivals (Num 28 agrees with Lev 23).<sup>255</sup> This relationship appears to be influenced by the eighth-day.

At an earlier time when the two festivals were certainly known to be separate, the duration of the festival was not yet codified.<sup>256</sup> That is Wagenaar's point. The discussion of *Mazzot* in Exod 12:18 makes this clear:

"In the first month, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day, you shall eat unleavened bread."

Some scholars argue that the method of time reckoning here is the same as that used with Yom Kippur in Lev 23:32. There, the festival is reckoned from the evening of the ninth day to the evening of the tenth.<sup>257</sup> According to Hoenig:

The Feast of Unleavened Bread then was counted from sunset of the 14<sup>th</sup> day, counting for seven days (daytimes) until the end of daylight of the 21<sup>st</sup> day...the actual observance of the Festival of Mazzot was six full days of 24 hours each, to which were added one-half day at the beginning of the period...and one-half day at the end...<sup>258</sup>

Assuming that a day began at morning and went to the next morning,<sup>259</sup> the writer(s) separated the two festivals and then, by denoting firm, respective start days, turned their duration into an eight-day event.<sup>260</sup> The fourteenth is the day of פסח and the fifteenth starts the seven days of *Mazzot*. It is a 1+7 construct. Note, however, that the writer moved away from the evening designation, but he did not change the days involved from Exod 12.

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<sup>255</sup> Wagenaar, *Post-Exilic*, p. 5. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 1971.

<sup>256</sup> H. G. May, 'The Relation of the Passover to the Festival of Unleavened Cakes,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 55 (1936) p. 67; J. G. McConville, 'Deuteronomy's Unification of Passover and Mazzot: A Response to Bernard M. Levinson,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 119.1 (2000) pp. 47-58; S. B. Hoenig, 'The Duration of the Festival of Matzot,' *Jewish Quarterly Review* 49.4 (1959) p. 274; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 1971-2.

<sup>257</sup> I. Knohl, *Sabbath*, pp. 78-9; Hoenig, *Duration*, p. 274; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 1967-8.

<sup>258</sup> Hoenig, *Duration*, p. 275.

<sup>259</sup> Milgrom *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 1967.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.* p. 1974. Milgrom hints that Exod 12:18 may be a condensing from eight to seven days.

It is surprising that the writer of Leviticus did not employ the designation of **עצרת** from Deut 16:8 for the final day of *Mazzot*, especially as he designated that day a **מקרא-קדש**, unlike the seventh-day of Booths. Hayward has shown how important the term **עצרת** is to the eighth-day throughout the Bible and Jewish literature,<sup>261</sup> and the use of it in Lev 23 would have cemented the festival as an eighth-day event. In any event, some saw it as an eight-day event as evidenced by Josephus' description:

Whence it is that, in memory of what we were then in, we keep a feast for eight days, which is called the feast of unleavened bread.<sup>262</sup>

Hoenig makes the connection when he comments that Josephus must have joined the two festivals together to arrive at eight days.<sup>263</sup> The strong theme of the eighth-day in Leviticus suggests that this conclusion was the whole point of the careful delineation between festivals. If this is so, then all the **ל** festivals in Leviticus rest on an eighth-day foundation.<sup>264</sup>

### **Chapter Summary:**

In this chapter, the foundation of the Jubilee is presented as theological. Wright demonstrated that the Jubilee's two main concerns of land and the status of the people of Israel were in relation to Yahweh and resulted in restoration and redemption. The three components of the theological angle investigated have

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<sup>261</sup> Hayward, *Israel*, pp. 139-55.

<sup>262</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities* 2.15.1 (317).

<sup>263</sup> Hoenig, *Duration*, p. 276.

<sup>264</sup> Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 343. It may be that only 'eighth-day' festivals were in the **ל** category. That would address the curious situation listed by McConville, *Unification*, p. 51, where he observes that Deut 16 seems to downgrade *Mazzot* from a **ל** and **פסח** into one. If the two comprise an eight-day event, it wouldn't matter, and the new status for **פסח** would fit with his overall concern of the polarity between the meeting place with Yahweh and Israelite homes as the places of regular life (see his p. 54). That sentiment resonates quite strongly with Jubilee ethics.

expanded that concept. They have shown the Jubilee to be a *profoundly* religious institution with themes that extend beyond itself into the stream of biblical-theological images.

At its core, the Jubilee is a cyclical encounter with Yahweh that is concerned with covenantal restoration and redemption, as was seen by its close association with Yom Kippur. The sounding of a certain type of trumpet—a יוֹבֵל—was seen as a divine announcement of an intentional, nationwide encounter with Yahweh. It was suggested that the יוֹבֵל was the signal of a specific type-scene that had five standard motifs. The יוֹבֵל events of Sinai and Jericho are types of the events that bring the fulfilment of redemption and restoration. These יוֹבֵל events rarely occur and when they do, they are at pivotal junctures in the OT account of Israel. Their respective subject matter provides definition to their Jubilee meaning:

*The יוֹבֵל at Sinai is the quintessential establishment of Israel as עַבְד to Yahweh.  
The יוֹבֵל at Jericho is the quintessential deliverance of land tenure to Israel.*

The classification of the Jubilee as being of eighth-day quality means that, by its nature, the Jubilee is a completion of the old and an inauguration of the new—this is inherent in the nature of a cycle. The eighth-day, however, suggests something new and unexpected: the restoration will occur outside of the Sabbath cycle! The eighth-day was found throughout the OT and extra-biblical sources; it was found in various cultic expressions, such as the final stage of ritual purity purification when one could come back into contact with the *sancta* and the day of acceptance for sacrificial animals. The eighth-day was the inauguration of the altar and the initiation of infant boys. All of these intertextual expressions support this conclusion: the Jubilee cannot be viewed as simply a remarkable part of the cultic calendar, never practiced and long neglected.

Rather, the Jubilee is a magisterial expression of the theologies of the covenant and the cult, culminating the old and inaugurating the new (i.e. looking back to redemption and ahead to restoration). This conclusion, then, must be allowed its influence in the reading of the Jubilee, first in its original context, then within ancient Israel and, finally, in deciphering its place and influence within the canon.

## **Chapter Three**

### **The Social Angle**

The second angle to be considered is the social angle. In the previous chapter, a series of different questions concerning the religious aspects of the Jubilee arose when interpretive priority was placed on the theological angle. In the same way, the questions surrounding the social angle change as well—the trajectory of interpretation changes by asking how the theology of the event interprets the social, instead of *vice versa*.

The aim of this chapter is to analyse Lev 25 in terms of structure and the social relationships it describes. Attention will also be given to a number of the exegetical observations arising out of source critical work.

### **Wright's Social Angle on the Jubilee:**

Although Wright sees the Jubilee as an essentially economic institution, it is the social angle that really provides the context and framework for his understanding of the Jubilee. Wright has written extensively on the social structure of ancient Israel,<sup>1</sup> and he applies his understanding to the Jubilee by highlighting three distinct aspects: first is the kin-based social structure of ancient Israel; second is the distinction between the Jubilee laws and the redemption laws in Lev 25; and the third is his interpretation of Lev 25:25-55 as a description of “descending stages of poverty.”<sup>2</sup> After summarising these points separately, I will offer my critique of Wright's social angle in a way that outlines the chapter's further investigation.

### **The Social Structure of Israel**

Wright divides the kinship relations in Israel into three groups: the tribe, the clan (or more precisely, he argues, the kinship group<sup>3</sup>), and the father's house. For

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example Wright, *God's People*, and C. J. H. Wright, 'Family,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 2: 761-769.

<sup>2</sup> Wright, *Walking*, p. 203

<sup>3</sup> Wright, *God's People*, p. 49.

Wright, it is the latter two groups, which are the more important for understanding the social and economic fabric of Israel.<sup>4</sup>

The clan was the “in-between” group—the middle organizational group between the tribe and the individual household (father’s house). The primary concerns of the clan were economic: protection was paramount, but restoration was also necessary when ill fortune befell a clan member.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the clan provided a more precise identity than the tribe because the clans were named after Jacob’s grandsons (for the most part), and the clan provided a geographical orientation—member households dwelt within the clan territory.<sup>6</sup> Wright understands the redemption laws of Lev 25 to be focused on the clan.

The father’s house is just as important to Wright’s interpretation as is the clan. The father’s house was an extended family, complete with servants and employees.<sup>7</sup> The household could be quite large, but it was governed by a patriarch who bore the responsibilities of security, protection, and education, and who also provided the most precise means of identity.<sup>8</sup> Wright defines a father’s house as “...a sizable group of related nuclear families descended in the male line from a living progenitor, including up to three or four generations.”<sup>9</sup>

### **The Jubilee and Redemption Laws**

While the redemption laws were the means for the clan to protect and restore the economic fortunes of its members, the Jubilee laws were intended to protect the father’s house. In his exegesis of Lev 25, Wright is concerned to first delineate the two strands of legislation and then to demonstrate how they have been interwoven in

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<sup>4</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 291. Cf. Judges 6:15.

<sup>5</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p.199.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 291.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 297.



the text.<sup>10</sup> After examining the two strands of law, Wright's conclusion is that there are two main differences between the Jubilee and redemption laws. The **first** was timing; redemption of property and persons could take place locally and at any time, but the Jubilee was a national event occurring at a set time.<sup>11</sup> The **second** difference was that of purpose: redemption kept property and persons within the clan. The Jubilee, Wright says, provided an override, erasing any effects of abuse by one household towards another by the misuse of the redemption system.<sup>12</sup> In other words, no clan member could slowly accumulate means of wealth by exploiting the redemption structure—the Jubilee provided a “reset” every fifty years, correcting any economic oppression and debt accumulation that may have occurred in the previous Jubilee period.

### **The Descending Stages of Poverty:**

The last aspect that Wright discusses concerning the social angle is exegetical. The way he (along with Milgrom<sup>13</sup>) understands the text of Lev 25:25-55 is that it describes the remedies for three increasingly desperate economic situations, or stages, that might befall a father's house in Israel.

This interpretation focuses more upon the legislation *per se*, rather than on the text as the product of historical development. It views the text through an economic lens, understanding each stage of the theory to be describing a specific economic condition that is contingent upon the previous stage.<sup>14</sup> Each stage is announced by an identical phrase of a conditional nature. The first stage, vv. 25-28, describes a farmer

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<sup>10</sup> Wright, *Walking*, p. 203; idem, *God's People*, pp. 121-5.

<sup>11</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 295.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> I have chosen these two as representatives. Others follow this view and structure their commentary around 'Steps/Stages to Jubilee.' Cf. Japhet, *Manumission*, p. 75; Tidball, *Leviticus*, pp. 296-99 and Chirichigno, *Debt Slavery*, pp. 324-39.

<sup>14</sup> Wright, *God's People*, p. 121; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2191.

who is forced, presumably by debt, to sell part of his ancestral property. Perhaps his crisis resulted from one or more bad harvests.<sup>15</sup> This unhappy situation has several possible remedies, the most desirable being that a member of the family functioning in the role of kinsman redeemer prevents the loss of property. If no close relative is capable (or willing) to assume the role, the farmer may later prosper, and he may buy it back. If no redemption is possible, the land will revert to the farmer and his family at the Jubilee.<sup>16</sup>

The second stage, found in vv. 35-37, presumes that the farmer cannot halt a downward economic slide, which brings him to a further point of crisis. Here, Wright and Milgrom diverge slightly in their theories. Wright assumes that the farmer made additional, partial sales of his property and yet, between the declining amount of workable land and the consequent declining return from it, he has been brought to the point of destitution. At that point, he must then rely on his brother to sustain him like a resident alien, presumably while he pays off his loans from his remaining holdings.<sup>17</sup> Milgrom assumes that another crop failure forces default on a second loan and the land itself is lost to the farmer by forfeiture, while he retains the usufruct. The farmer can use the produce to pay off the loan because of its interest free nature. The difference between the two authors is that Milgrom assumes the farmer has technically lost his land but still owes on his loan and thus stays on the land as a tenant farmer.<sup>18</sup>

Stage three in vv. 39-55, is the final and most desperate situation. The farmer cannot support himself or his family and sells himself into slavery. This stage has two

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<sup>15</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2193.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. p. 2191.

<sup>17</sup> Wright, *God's People*, p. 122. Cf. Chirichigno, *Debt Slavery*, p. 327.

<sup>18</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2204.

different scenarios (3a and 3b, as Wright calls them<sup>19</sup>) depending on the ethnicity of the buyer. First, if an Israelite sells himself to another Israelite, he is to be treated as a resident hired worker. Redemption is not presented as an option in this scenario.<sup>20</sup> Alternatively, if he sells himself to a resident alien, the Israelite is to be redeemed if at all possible, and if not, he is to be monitored so as to prevent him from being abused by the resident alien. At the Jubilee, all Israelite slaves would be restored.<sup>21</sup> This interpretation obviously places each stage in sequential dependency upon the preceding stage.

### **Assessment Of Wright's Social Angle**

Perhaps the best way to proceed is to address each of the three aspects just mentioned in such a way as to offer an assessment while also setting the course for this chapter. Importantly, the following comments arise from the attempt to use Wright's ethical triangle in order to re-read the Jubilee with an emphasis upon the theological angle rather than the social.

### **The Social Structure of Israel**

Without question, Wright has made a significant contribution through his sociological insights. However, I feel he may have over-emphasised their importance for Jubilee interpretation. There are two ideas lurking behind this suspicion.

**First**, while the clan and father's house explanations enlighten the text, they are not as helpful in understanding the substantial emphasis on the individual in Lev 25. One of the fruits of source criticism is the observation that the change in the number of address (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, singular and plural) is extensive in Lev 25 and requires some explanation. There are significant portions of Lev 25 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person

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<sup>19</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics* p. 204

<sup>20</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2216.

<sup>21</sup> Wright, *God's People*, p. 123.

singular address and how they relate to Wright's clan/father's house structure is not clear. I have included a study on this matter below (the *Numeruswechsel*) to investigate the possibility that instead of a source critical phenomenon, the number of address is a clue that the primary relationship Lev 25 wishes to maintain is that of the Israelite's theological standing with Yahweh.

**Second**, Wright asserts that in the third stage of poverty (in v. 49—stage 3b), the issue is that the Israelite has been sold to someone outside of his own clan.<sup>22</sup> This assertion, of course, logically follows Wright's idea that the redemption laws are germane to the clan. The problem, however, is that the text is clearly concerned with an *Israelite* being sold to a *non-Israelite*. While Wright is correct that the destitute man's family and clan should redeem him, it appears that the real issue is the theological impact of the man's socio-economic status of slave *to* a גֵר, relative to his standing with Yahweh—the one who claims him as a slave! This matter is explored below in the discussion of the resident alien/sojourner.

### **The Jubilee and Redemption Laws**

Wright's conclusion of these laws' relationship naturally flows from his notion that the original redemption laws circulated independently from the Jubilee laws.<sup>23</sup> The Jubilee legislation itself (vv. 8-12) contains seven distinct elements:

- 1) The counting of the seven times seven years (v. 8).
- 2) The trumpet sounded on the Day of Atonement (v. 9).
- 3) Consecration of the fiftieth year (v.10).
- 4) "Liberty" proclaimed to all the inhabitants (v.10).
- 5) Restoration of inalienable land to the original family (v.10).
- 6) Release of debt bondage so slaves could return to their families (v.10).
- 7) The land was to lie fallow in the fiftieth year (v.11).

It is clear from this list that the majority of Lev 25 does not deal directly with the Jubilee legislation but rather with the implications that the Jubilee and the

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<sup>22</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 204.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p. 203. Cf. Lemche, *Manumission*, p. 56.

redemption laws have upon the intervening forty-nine years. The ethical implications are obvious. The text presents the Year of Jubilee as a cyclical, theological event that both preceded and followed a forty-nine year period of socio-economic ethical demands from Yahweh. The Jubilee remedied what remained uncorrected from the intervening years. For example, if the prescribed redemption procedures did not work in the case of lost land (vv. 25-28), the Jubilee provided remedy. If an Israelite were sold to another Israelite, that situation would also be remedied at the Jubilee (v. 40). If the prescribed redemption procedures concerning an Israelite enslaved to a non-Israelite (vv. 47-54) did not work, the Jubilee would provide the remedy (v. 54). Consequently, only intractable economic cases would cause Yahweh, at the Jubilee, to function as the **לש**.

The difficulty is that Wright's interpretation, of necessity, leads to a negative view of the legislation's purpose—it is to prohibit or counteract oppression:

Debt happens, and the Old Testament recognizes that fact. But the jubilee was an attempt to limit its otherwise relentless and endless social consequences by limiting its possible duration.<sup>24</sup>

There is precious little in the text that *demand*s an interpretation that the brother becomes poor due to abuse of redemption. In fact, should the destitute brother sell his property or himself outside of the clan, and it is not redeemed by a clan member before the Jubilee, then Wright's theory of the Jubilee being an override of redemption abuse becomes irrelevant. There is much of value in Wright's interpretation, but we must look further for the rationale behind Lev 25.

### **The Descending Stages of Poverty**

There is much help here as well—predominantly the descriptive reconstructions of the situations described in the stages. However, this interpretation

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<sup>24</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 208.

depends heavily on a difficult issue—the role of debt. On the one hand, it is obvious that, conceptually, debt is critical to understanding the Jubilee legislation. On the other hand, it is remarkable that such a pivotal concept is never mentioned—it is assiduously avoided, even where it could be mentioned. How should we allow its absence to influence our reading of the text? Must we read vv. 25-55 as a sequential process of the ravages of (implied) debt—or is there another way to read them?

There are commentators who, while observing the structure, do not interpret the stages sequentially.<sup>25</sup> A significant difference between the two approaches is the fact that the ‘descending distress’ theory restricts the cause of distress to wholly economic (i.e. agricultural) causes. Even in a relatively uncomplicated society such as Israel, there would be other reasons for the onset of poverty, alienation or slavery.<sup>26</sup> A judicial decision imposing slavery for theft is a notable example (Ex 22:2 Heb.). The foundational cause of the stages is certainly destitution; that much is evident. Precisely what brought about the destitution is not as evident.

The purpose of this chapter is to address the above issues and attempt to present a different reading of the socio-economic relationships and laws of Lev 25. In addition to the above concerns, I will attempt to integrate another important finding of source criticism, the introductory phrase, which occurs in vv. 25, 35, 39, 47.

This chapter, then, will begin with an extended and detailed discussion of significant textual data, which I think provides an alternate outline and structure to Lev 25 (compared to the descending poverty reading). Upon this foundation, the study of the introductory phrases will be laid, followed by an investigation of the *Numeruswechsel*, or *Stilwechsel*, as it’s also called. At that point, I will attempt to

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 316-22; Levine, *Leviticus*, pp. 175-180.

<sup>26</sup> See Hudson, *Economic*, p. 29; Jackson, *Justice*, p. 229; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2213-14 gives a full listing of possible causes.

draw the structural elements of the Jubilee/redemption laws together before considering the social categories of the resident alien/sojourner and making concluding remarks.

## **The Structure of Lev 25:8-55**

### **The Main Outline**

An analysis of Lev 25 does demonstrate that the legislation combines Jubilee laws and “interim years” laws—the ethical instructions, including redemption, aimed at governing the intervening forty-nine years. It is helpful in the analysis of these laws to begin by noting the three-fold occurrence in Lev 25:17, 38, 55 of the “self-introductory phrase”<sup>27</sup> “I am the LORD your God” (repeated with precision in Hebrew: **אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם**). That same phrase is used in Lev 19 as a structural marker (oscillating between the full phrase and the shorter **אֲנִי יְהוָה**) that specifically delineate the termination of paragraphs (cf. 19: 3, 4, 10, 12, 14, 16, 18).<sup>28</sup> Moreover, the phrase appears seven times each within the two sections of chapter 19 (19:1-18, 19-36) and it also provides the conclusion for each of the two sections (vv. 18, 37).<sup>29</sup>

It seems reasonable to suggest that the phrase, **אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם**, may function in the same manner (i.e. as a structural marker) in the Jubilee legislation.<sup>30</sup>

Bodendorfer comments on the self-introductory formulas:

Both forms occur very frequently in the Holiness Code. They have a primarily structuring function as concluding formulas. The short forms

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<sup>27</sup> Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 261, concerning Lev 19, “God’s “formula of self-introduction”...is used more frequently than elsewhere in the Old Testament as an organizational device. All the more important subsections are designated and separated from one another by this expression.”

<sup>28</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 316; Kaiser, *Leviticus*, p. 1170.

<sup>29</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 251. The final and eighth occurrence of the second section (v. 37) should be viewed as the concluding appearance according to Rooker, not as included within the second section.

<sup>30</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 316; Kaiser, *Leviticus*, p. 1170; Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery*, p. 323.

subdivide the various series of commands, whereas the long forms set the main sections apart from the subdivisions.<sup>31</sup>

When Bodendorfer's structural theory is applied to Lev 25, the following outline becomes evident:

Section:	vv. 8-17	vv. 18-38	vv. 39-55
Terminal Phrase:	אני יהוה אל היכם	אני יהוה אל היכם	אני יהוה אל היכם

A number of helpful observations can be made from this graph that expand and develop the outline. **First**, the three injunctions in Lev 25 to “fear your God” (וִירֵאתָ מֵאלֹהֶיךָ) are evenly distributed within the above graph—one instance in each section (vv. 17, 36, 43). The identical repetition suggests that the legislation within each section differs enough from the others to warrant its own reiteration of the exhortative statement. Part of that difference stems from the fact that each section contains an “unregulatable situation,”<sup>32</sup> which is a relational, ethical demand almost impossible for someone outside the immediate relationship to monitor.

For example, there are three separate concerns in Lev 25 motivated by the “fear of God.” The first occurrence is a general statement requiring that Israelites not cheat or take advantage of a brother in a real-estate transaction (v.17). The second concern is the prohibition of profiteering at the expense of a destitute brother, specifically by means of charging interest (v. 36). The third, in v. 43, prohibits the ruling of a brother with harshness. These injunctions are similar to those in Lev 19:

<sup>31</sup> G. Bodendorfer, ‘אני יהוה’: God’s Self-Introductory Formula in Leviticus in Midrash Sifra,’ in R. Rendtorff and R. Kugler (eds.) *The Book of Leviticus: Composition and Reception* (Leiden: Brill, 2003) p. 403. See also K. Elliger, ‘Ich bin der Herr- euer Gott,’ in H. Gese and O. Kaiser (eds.) *Kleine Schriften zum Alten Testament* (Munchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1966) pp. 211-231, esp. here pp. 219-20; W. Zimmerli, ‘Ich bin Jahwe,’ in his *Gottes Offenbarung* (Munchen: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1963) pp. 179-208.

<sup>32</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2179. Cf. Houston, *What’s Just?* p. 37; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 437.



14, 32 concerning the treatment of the blind and showing respect for the aged, respectively. All cases in Leviticus that are motivated by the fear of God demand the regulation of behaviour towards a person with compromised defences.<sup>33</sup> In all five occurrences above, the motivation provides a trenchant reminder that it is God who is the avenger of his people and of the disadvantaged (cf. Ex 22: 20; Nah 1:1-3).<sup>34</sup>

However, the inclusion of a positive command in 19: 32 concerning the aged (in the form of a carefully arranged introversion emphasising respect<sup>35</sup>) must moderate the tendency to interpret the “fear of God” motivation as *solely* aimed at combating oppressive or exploitative behaviour.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps it is better said that the “fear of God” is a motivation aimed at producing a properly ordered society (which in Leviticus means properly oriented towards Yahweh<sup>37</sup>). Its intent, then, is not only on eliminating oppression and exploitation but also on producing fairness in financial matters (25:14-17; cf. 19: 35-36) and proper behaviour to covenant members (19:18), most notable the aged (19: 32). This interpretation of “fear” considers both the positive and negative nuances of the motivation and notes that within Lev 25 the injunctions are positioned precisely at the points of the ethical concerns listed above, because the outcome of these crises will have a direct influence upon the type of society that Israel will be.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> See Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, p. 1641.

<sup>34</sup> Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 411.

<sup>35</sup> Currid, *Leviticus*, p. 263.

<sup>36</sup> See Bonar, *Leviticus*, p. 188; Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 381. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, p. 1641; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 424.

<sup>37</sup> M. V. Van Pelt and W. C. Kaiser, Jr., ‘**סג**,’ in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 2:527-533 place this ethical aspect of **סג** in Leviticus under the heading of worship.

<sup>38</sup> Houston, *What’s Just?*, p. 37. Cf. S. Terrien, ‘Fear,’ in G.A. Buttrick (ed.) *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) 2:256-260, “...there is no paradox in the liturgical command, “Serve Yahweh with fear and rejoice with trembling!” (Ps. 2:11).”

**Second**, since each self-introductory phrase terminates a section and is accompanied by its own motivating explanation, it seems likely that these are clues to structure. Only in the case of v. 17 is that motivation the “fear of God,” just discussed. In that case, the general nature of the directive (not cheating one’s brother) is specifically motivated. The other motivations are aimed at the substantive matters of the legislation—land and slavery.

The second instance of self-introduction (v. 38), concerns land and is attended by the explanation that Yahweh’s action in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt expressed his resolute intention to give them the land of Canaan (an assertion already stated in v. 2). Milgrom notes the importance of v. 2 where that intention is specifically articulated.<sup>39</sup> Verse 38 is important within the discussion of land. It occurs at the end of a lengthy discourse (beginning at v. 18) of agricultural matters, such as: agricultural provision (vv. 19-22), land ownership and tenure (vv. 23-24), land sale and redemption (vv. 25-28), land sale/redemption exceptions (vv. 29-34), and ‘supporting’ a troubled brother on his land (vv. 35-38). All of these ethical issues are set in a communal context. Precisely how these verses are to be arranged is still a matter of debate.<sup>40</sup> Thus, it appears that the occurrence of the self-introductory phrase in v. 38 does play a structural role, finalising the topic of land-release.

In v. 39, the legislation turns to the topic of slavery and its accompanying issues: status and duration (vv. 39-41), treatment of Israelite slaves (vv. 41-43), exceptions (vv. 44-46), and slavery to a non-Israelite master (vv. 47-54). The final occurrence of the self-introductory phrase in v. 55 terminates the discussion of

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<sup>39</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2212. W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) p. 99, says “...nowhere in the Hebrew Bible have the Exodus, the Landgabe, and part of the covenant formula been juxtaposed as in v. 38...”

<sup>40</sup> See below, n. 59.

slavery as well as the entire chapter on the Jubilee. In v. 55, the accompanying explanation focuses upon the status of the people of Israel as servants/slaves of Yahweh, noting again that their situation originated by virtue of Yahweh's release of them from Egypt (cf. v. 38).

Therefore, just as vv. 18-38 discuss matters of land, so vv. 39-55 provide a parallel discussion of matters of slavery.<sup>41</sup> The two sections both end with a terminal formula/explanation combination. The earlier outline can now be expanded by the inclusion of these findings:

Section:	vv. 8-17	vv. 18-38	vv. 39-55
Terminal Phrase:	אני יהוה אלהיכם	אני יהוה אלהיכם	אני יהוה אלהיכם
Fear Injunction:	ויראת מאלהיך	ויראת מאלהיך	ויראת מאלהיך
Motivation:	ויראת מאלהיך	אשר-הוצאתי אתכם	אשר-הוצאתי אותם
Section topic:	General matters	Land-release	Slave-release

### The 'General Matters' Section of vv. 8-17

The specific conclusions of the land-release and slave-release sections are in striking contrast to the general conclusion of vv. 14-17. The broad nature of vv. 14-17 includes both buying and selling instructions. The consideration that the "fear" injunction is a motive for proper order in society and not an anti-oppression tool plays an important role in interpreting this paragraph.

In modern Jubilee interpretation, we have seen that emphasis is often placed on the Jubilee as an historical counteraction to economic oppression. Interpretation, then, both popular and critical, carries strong overtones of justice.<sup>42</sup> Houston notes,

<sup>41</sup> Chirichigno, *Debt Slavery*, p. 322; Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 300. Authors may note the parallel nature of the laws but split the paragraph differently than I have.

<sup>42</sup> See above, pp. 74-78. Note especially Kanyoro, *Feminine*, p. 401 where she states: "The biblical jubilee was in the first place about the restoration of justice. God's intention for the history of Israel was to establish a covenant relationship based on justice."

however, that the vocabulary of justice is conspicuously absent from the chapter.<sup>43</sup>

This absence does not warrant a conclusion that issues of justice (or economic oppression, or debt) are absent from the chapter. Clearly they are present, and Houston proceeds to describe Lev 25 in terms of justice.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, even a cursory glance at the word **נָחַץ** (vv.14, 17) reveals that its use “...expresses economic exploitation, extortion, and despoliation in ancient Israelite society.”<sup>45</sup>

However, in this pivotal paragraph, the absence of a vocabulary of justice does suggest that overtones of justice must be toned down (much like the “fear of God”) to the point of conveying an exhortation to proper order, which says, “do not take advantage of a brother in land transactions.”<sup>46</sup> The importance of **נָחַץ** for Jubilee interpretation lies in the fact that its occurrence constitutes the only place where the vocabulary of oppression is used concerning land issues. Apparently, the writer’s intent was to prohibit exploitative business dealings, which could potentially cause a negative change in a brother’s economic status.

It is true that the word **פָּרַץ** (“brutal, ruthless...used exclusively of treatment of fellow humans”<sup>47</sup>) occurs three times in the final section of slavery, but these occurrences address the prohibition of abusive treatment towards one who is *already within* a specific economic category (slavery), rather than oppression aimed at

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<sup>43</sup> Houston, *What’s Just?*, p. 35. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2173.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> I. Swart, ‘**נָחַץ**,’ in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 2:471-2. Cf. the negative view in Bonar, *Leviticus*, p. 188.

<sup>46</sup> Wright, *Eye*, p. 83; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2177; J. B. Jeyaraj, ‘Ownership, Tenancy and Care of Land in Leviticus 25-27,’ *Arasardi Journal of Theological Reflection* 4.2 (1991) p. 22 sees this paragraph as foundational for the following discussion of redemption.

<sup>47</sup> L. Walker, ‘**פָּרַץ**,’ W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 3: 687.

depriving a brother of his economic means.<sup>48</sup> If **נָחַץ** essentially addresses the pursuit of fair dealings rather than providing a strong definition of exploitation, then its interpretation here is similar to the text's stance on debt. The presupposition of debt is present within Lev 25 and is even necessary for its interpretation, but it does not erase the fact that the text does not directly address or discuss debt.<sup>49</sup> Likewise, the text *may* be concerned with oppression but it does not directly discuss it.

Relevant to this section (vv. 14-17) are the later stories ("later" according to the OT storyline) of land sales. Apart from the highly complex legal transaction of Elimelech, Naomi and Boaz,<sup>50</sup> there are a number of other sales mentioned in the OT, which lack any nuance of economic oppression. For example, while it has been suggested that Abraham's purchase of the cave at Machpelah was transacted at an inflated price<sup>51</sup> (implying an oppressive deal), it is also possible to argue that the arrangement reveals Abraham's astuteness in purchasing the land in an extravagant manner at an inflated price, effectively placing the land beyond any possibility of

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<sup>48</sup> Nonetheless, the two terms (**נָחַץ** and **פָּרַךְ**) are probably to be seen as parallel concepts, relative to their respective topics. The other section, land release, has its own peculiar word, **לְצַמְחָה**, to be discussed below.

<sup>49</sup> R. B. Sloane, *The Favorable Year of the Lord* (Austin, TX: Schola Press, 1977) pp. 20-21, n.18 makes the intriguing observation: "The lack of explicit mention in Lev. 25 of the cancellation of debts is only explicable insofar as...it is the only provision that did not require repetition inasmuch as it was done in exactly the same form in the preceding Sabbath year, i.e., the 49<sup>th</sup> year..." He assumes servitude from the other codes was on a 'revolving' seven-year period, and not tied to the universal Sabbatical.

<sup>50</sup> See R. L. Hubbard, *The Book of Ruth* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988) pp. 48-62, for a discussion of this problem. While the issues in Ruth are not the same as Lev 25, there are no overtones of economic oppression.

<sup>51</sup> So R. K. Hughes, *Genesis* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2004) p. 310, but cf. Kidner, *Genesis*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1967) p. 146, n.1.

reclaim by Ephron or his descendants.<sup>52</sup> King Omri purchased his capital hill in Samaria in a transaction apparently congenial enough that he then named it for the previous owner, Shemer. Omri also put his purchase effectively beyond reclaim by building a city on it (I Kings 16:24). In a similar account, King David purchased land for an altar (and subsequently the Temple) from Ornan, who sold his threshing floor to the king after David refused to receive it as a gift (1 Chr 21:18-22:1).

The additional issue within these land-sale stories of the purchased land placed beyond reclaim (even beyond the Jubilee) is very important, but should not distract from the point—which is the normal business-like manner of the land transactions. Further examples are the ideal wife of Proverbs 31, who is praised for her ability to discern and purchase real estate for her family’s welfare (Pr 31:16). Presumably, Lemuel did not commend the woman’s prescience in determining which destitute soul it was most advantageous to exploit (cf. Pr 31: 20). Or, Ahab and Jezebel, who certainly oppressed Naboth (terminally!), but their evil was apparently not (initially) economical oppression because Ahab’s first request to buy the vineyard was proposed with the full expectation of a rather colourless business transaction (I Kings 21:1-16).<sup>53</sup> Finally (and this is a disputed piece of evidence), though Jeremiah’s transaction of the family land appears to have been a redemption purchase, it is also arguable that Hanamel was selling the land to him outright.<sup>54</sup> Economic oppression is not the primary issue in either scenario.

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<sup>52</sup> J. Walton, *Genesis*, NIVAC (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 2001) pp. 528-9. See R. Westbrook, *Property*, pp. 91-117, especially p. 116 regarding permanent land sales at “full price.”

<sup>53</sup> F. I. Anderson, ‘The Socio-Juridical Background of the Naboth Incident,’ *Journal of Biblical Literature* 85 (1966) p. 49.

<sup>54</sup> So D. R. G. Beattie, ‘The Book of Ruth as Evidence for Israelite Legal Practice,’ *Vetus Testamentum* 24 (1974) p. 257; D. A. Leggett, *The Levirate and Goel Institutions in the Old Testament* (Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack Publishing Company, 1974) pp. 96-98.

All of the above stories concern land transactions, which were conducted without economic oppression and they therefore must be understood as regulating fairness among covenant members precisely because real estate could be legally exchanged for a variety of reasons, not only distress. Thus, understanding Lev 25:14-17 as a *generalised* conditional statement of fairness governing both sides of real estate transactions during the interim years seems to be the best option. The goal, again, was to prohibit exploitative business dealings, which could potentially cause a negative change in a brother's economic status.

Returning back to the matter of structure, the opening verses of the Jubilee legislation (vv. 8-12) are apodictic, or more precisely, unconditional.<sup>55</sup> By nature, then, they are generalised directives. Verses 14-17 are conditional, signalled by the casuistic phrase, **וְכִי־תִמְכְּרוּ מִמֶּכֶר**, at the start of v. 14.<sup>56</sup> Verse 13 is noticeably displaced by this construct, but I am in agreement with Levine that it is a “general, introductory statement,”<sup>57</sup> with the *caveat* that it also provides a link backwards (spanning the transition from the Jubilee topics of vv. 8-12—especially v. 10, which it

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<sup>55</sup> The terminology for the forms of law has changed from the early days of A. Alt and his initial proposal concerning casuistic and apodictic forms (R. N. Soulen and R. K. Soulen, *Handbook of Biblical Criticism*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) p. 12. While the rigidity of Alt's proposal has been exposed, the terms themselves are still valuable, if defined well and used consistently. In this paper, “casuistic” and “conditional” will be used as exact synonyms, defined using Sonsino's language simply as presenting a case and stipulating a legal consequence. They are thus situational, and the pertinent laws of Lev 25 would be in the “When-you” form, second person singular or plural (R. Sonsino, ‘Forms of Biblical Law,’ in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 4:252-4. Likewise, “apodictic” and “unconditional” are considered synonyms, meaning absolute laws with no case information necessarily attached. Cf. G. Liedke, *Gestalt und Bezeichnung alttestamentlicher Rechssätze* (WMANT 39; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1971) p. 31-32; M. J. Selman, ‘Law,’ in T.D. Alexander and David W. Baker (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003) p. 497-515.

<sup>56</sup> Sonsino, *Forms*, p. 253.

<sup>57</sup> Levine, *Leviticus*, p. 172.

duplicates) and forwards, into the land transaction laws of vv. 14-17.<sup>58</sup> Graphically, the first section of the Jubilee legislation appears like this:

vv. 8-12	Unconditional, general Jubilee directives
v. 13	Transitional verse
vv. 14-17	Conditional, general land transaction legislation
v. 17	Conclusion of self-introductory phrase and explanation

### The General Section of vv. 18-24

Turning to vv. 18-38, we find a high level of variation among commentators as to its literary breakdown.<sup>59</sup> The most common approach to the section views vv.

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<sup>58</sup> Rashi, *Leviticus*, p. 114b sees v. 13 as a repetition of v. 10, a view also held by Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2176.

<sup>59</sup> The structure of the land section is very important, and therefore, not surprisingly, a matter of some debate. Some twenty-eight commentators addressed the matter of structure. Of that number, twenty placed a paragraph break after v. 22, the majority citing the change of topic for their basis. Verse 23 is seen by them to begin the topic of land redemption. Two commentators specifically mentioned the structural nature of the self-introductory formula, both in chap. 19 and in chap 25, but then proceeded to break the chapter at v. 22, using different criteria. Quite importantly to my argument, several scholars suggested a minor break after v. 24, effectively distancing vv. 23-24 from the surrounding text, claiming it functions as an introduction or heading to what follows. Three commentators place the break after v. 23 as the first mention of redemption is actually in v. 24. Four others suggest the break comes after v. 24, immediately before the conditional laws of vv. 25-55. Their reasons can be read in the main body. Finally, Kellogg, *Leviticus*, p. 492, from the turn of the century, fits no one mould, seeing no break at all between vv. 13-28.

**Commentators who break the section after v. 22:** Bonar, *Leviticus*, pp. 188-9; J. Calvin, *The Four Last Books of Moses*, vol. 3, p. 168; Currid, *Leviticus*, p. 329; Demarest, *Leviticus*, p. 266; Elliger, *Leviticus*, p. 351-4; Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 382; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 423; Houston, *What's Just?*, p. 35; Kaiser, *Leviticus*, p. 1170; Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 546; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2149; R. Peter-contesse and J. Ellington, *A Handbook on Leviticus* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1990) p. 383; Porter, *Leviticus*, p. 197; Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 306; Ross, *Holiness*, p. 457; Schultz, *Leviticus*, p. 121; Tidball, *Leviticus*, pp. 295-7; Van Selms, *Jubilee*, p. 496; Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 316; Wright, *Jubilee*, p. 1026.

**Commentators who regard vv. 23-24 as liminal and/or introductory:** Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 549; Levine, *Leviticus*, p. 175; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 2183ff; Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 306; Ross, *Holiness*, p. 457; Tidball, *Leviticus*, p. 296; Wright, *Jubilee*, p. 1026.

**Commentators who break the section after v. 23:** Bailey, *Leviticus*, p. 92; Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 188; Levine, *Leviticus*, pp. 174-5.



18-22 as one paragraph, followed by the second in vv. 23-38. Verse 23 is seen as playing an important role in the chapter as far as its influence on understanding structure. There are, however, good reasons to question this configuration.

**First**, the entirety of vv. 18-24 is in Yahweh's first person/second person plural address.<sup>60</sup> Although this style of address technically begins in v. 17, there is a section break between v. 17 and v. 18, seen by the two formulas in v. 17 (fear and the concluding self-introduction) and also by the second person singular address ending at v. 17, and the second person plural beginning in v. 18. In contrast, there is neither a corresponding *Numeruswechsel*,<sup>61</sup> nor a literary signal of any kind indicating a structural break between v. 23 and v. 24.

**Second**, in the majority view, the section break is understood to come after v. 22 because of a perceived change in content. However, there is no actual content change—the entirety of the paragraph discusses Yahweh's ownership and his relation to the land. Actually, the paragraph deals with the Israelites' relation to Yahweh and to the land (an example of Wright's triangular concept). Excerpts from the paragraph demonstrate the continuity of thought:

“You shall observe my statutes and faithfully keep my ordinances, so that you may live on the land securely...” (v. 18)

“I will order my blessing for you...” (v. 21)

“...the land is mine; with me you are but aliens and tenants.” (v. 23)

While the statement of v. 23 is widely regarded as the theological foundation of the Jubilee,<sup>62</sup> and it is important for interpretation, its influence should not dictate

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**Commentators who break the section after v. 24:** Bellinger, *Leviticus*, p. 150; R. K. Harrison, *Leviticus*, TOTC (Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1980), pp. 225-6; Budd, *Leviticus*, p. 348; Snaith, *Leviticus/Numbers*, pp. 111-2.

<sup>60</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 188.

<sup>61</sup> J. Joosten, *People and Land in the Holiness Code* (Leiden: Brill, 1996) p. 47 uses this word for “variation of number.”

<sup>62</sup> Of all the assertions concerning the Jubilee, the centrality of v. 23 enjoys the most pervasive support.

the structure. If the change of content determines where the paragraph breaks, it would be best to follow the commentators who separate between v. 23 and v. 24, since the first mention of redemption occurs in v. 24.

The idea of divine ownership of the land (the topic of v. 23) was already addressed, first in v. 2 concerning the gift of land, and then confirmed by vv. 14-17, which dictate that only the **תבואה** is sold, not the land. Rooker points out that the concept of divine ownership is not new with v. 23, having been introduced earlier in Leviticus (20: 22; 23: 2, 10, 38).<sup>63</sup> Nor should the earlier mentioned linguistic similarity to Exodus 19: 5, itself a statement of divine ownership, be forgotten.<sup>64</sup> We have also noted the idea of the land-gift as one of Wright's chief concerns in the theological angle. As was discussed in the last chapter, the topic of vv. 18-22 is the Jubilee year itself (and its adjacent years), rather than the Sabbatical or the interim years.<sup>65</sup>

The form of the first section (vv. 8-17) helps the analysis of vv. 18-24. By analysing the second section in the light of the first, the make-up of vv. 18-24 appears remarkably familiar. Verses 18-22 are generalised, unconditional statements. The opening phrase of v. 20 has the formal appearance of a casuistic law, **וְכִי תֹאמְרוּ מִה־נֶּאֱכַל**, but upon closer scrutiny it is merely an “if-then” statement/promise where Yahweh explains what he will do in response to a specific question or context.

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<sup>63</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 302.

<sup>64</sup> See above, p. 100.

<sup>65</sup> See pp. 113-116.

The unconditional section of vv. 18-22 is followed by a two-verse transition<sup>66</sup> (vv. 23-24) into the conditional laws of vv. 25-55. These conditional laws are, as mentioned, highly specific case laws, in numerous ways quite unlike their generalised counterpart in vv. 14-17. Before studying the remainder of this section (vv. 25-55), we can update the graph of the chapter by means of placing the first section and second sections side by side:

vv. 8-12	Unconditional, Jubilee, general directives	vv. 18-22
v. 13	Transitional verses	vv. 23-24
vv. 14-17 (gen.)	Conditional, interim years legislation	vv. 25-54 (specific)
v. 17	Concluding formula	v. 38, 55

### **The Conditional Section of vv. 25-55**

The above chart makes the conditional legislation of vv. 25-54 appear as though it is only one section instead of two.<sup>67</sup> This raises obvious questions: why is there a section break at v. 38? How can vv. 39-55 comprise an independent section while belonging to the entire conditional section? The answers to these questions bring us to the very heart of the conditional, interim years legislation.

The two topics addressed in vv. 18-55 are land and slavery, along with their respective attendant issues. The unconditional material is found in vv. 18-24; the conditional material begins at v. 25. The break within the conditional section that separates the two topics of land and slavery occurs at the concluding formula of the land topic in v. 38.<sup>68</sup> Thus, the conditional material of the two topics can be arranged this way:

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<sup>66</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 306; Joosten, *Holiness*, p. 58. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2188-89.

<sup>67</sup> Some commentators view it as one section. See Houston, *What's Just?* p. 35.

<sup>68</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 316.

vv. 25-38	vv. 39-55
Land: redemption and attendant issues	Slavery: redemption and attendant issues
Concluding formula: v. 38	Concluding formula: v. 55

The linguistic similarity between the two concluding formulas is striking, accentuated further by the difference in the topics concluded:<sup>69</sup>

v. 38: Land	v. 55: Slavery
אֲשֶׁר-הוּצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם	אֲשֶׁר-הוּצֵאתִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם	אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם

This graph highlights the theological importance of the Exodus for the Jubilee. The significant use of the word **צֵא** as having Exodus connotations is emphasised.<sup>70</sup> The mention of the Exodus is in the plural, which Joosten asserts is its normal style of address.<sup>71</sup> The point of these formula conclusions is that they bear conceptual, as well as grammatical similarities. It also should be noted that both formulas are a first/second person plural mix, which Gerstenberger has shown as typical of the divine self-introduction.<sup>72</sup> The only difference between these formulas is the change from the second person plural, **אֶתְכֶם**, in v. 38 to the third person plural, **אוֹתָם**, in v. 55.

Before moving on to vv. 25-55 (the conditional, interim year laws), a short summary might help. Simply put, the above data argues that the repetition of phrases and topics shows a three-part structure for the Jubilee: vv. 8-17; vv. 18-38 and vv. 39-55. Further, the breakdown of vv. 18-24 shows it to be a kind of introduction for the conditional laws of vv. 25-55. This latter, extended block of legislation has its own sub-structure, to which we now turn our attention.

<sup>69</sup> See Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2212.

<sup>70</sup> Hubbard, *Goel*, p. 11.

<sup>71</sup> Joosten, *Holiness*, p. 50.

<sup>72</sup> Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 373.

### The Introductory Phrase:

The single-most distinctive grammatical element in all the Jubilee legislation is the ‘introductory phrase,’ which occurs four times in vv. 25-55. This unique phrase, **וּכְיִימוֹךְ אֲהִיךְ**, repeats with marked precision in vv. 25, 35, and 39, and occurs again in a form slightly altered by context in v. 47. Importantly, the phrase occurs twice both in the land and in the slavery sections. Elliger notes its distinctive use in the land section by observing that v. 26 and v. 29 both contain a conditional form (**אִישׁ כִּי**) that is ‘inverted.’<sup>73</sup> Possibly, the inversion was intentional, in order to showcase the introductory phrase.

The word **מוֹךְ**, (“low, depressed, grow poor”<sup>74</sup>) in the introductory phrase is quite rare, appearing only five times in the OT, four times here in Lev 25 and the final time in Lev 27:8.<sup>75</sup> The phenomenon of such a rare word consistently occurring within a precisely repeated phrase calls for an explanation. The suggestion here is that the introductory phrase (of which **מוֹךְ** is part) is the main structuring device of the interim year regulations. This graph shows the form of the conditional material resulting from viewing the introductory phrase as structural tool:

Land:	Slavery
Introductory Phrase (vv. 25-34)	Introductory Phrase (vv. 39-46)
Introductory Phrase (vv. 35-38)	Introductory Phrase (vv. 47-55)
Concluding formula (v. 38)	Concluding formula (v. 55)

The introductory phrase enjoys a stable interpretive environment, being considered by all interpreters as conditional, and thought by many to be in some

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<sup>73</sup> Elliger, *Leviticus*, p. 339.

<sup>74</sup> W.R. Dörmers, “**מוֹךְ**,” in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 2:868.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

measure structural.<sup>76</sup> For example, Hartley claims the phrase betrays intentionality of arrangement,<sup>77</sup> while Wright and Milgrom, as mentioned above, arrange their interpretive theory of vv. 25-55 around the delineations that the phrase provides. It is from here that Wright derives his rationale that there are two types of law in Lev 25, suggesting that the phrases represent “...the original series of redemption regulations, unconnected, at first, with Jubilee regulations.”<sup>78</sup> Noth names the four occurrences a “series of subdivisions all beginning with the conditional clause...”<sup>79</sup>

The extraordinary consensus the phrase enjoys serves to increase confidence in its pivotal role for Jubilee interpretation. The impression is that the phrases have been deliberately inserted into their present positions to accentuate their uniqueness.<sup>80</sup> The characteristics of the introductory phrase can be easily summarised:

1. The phrase apparently provides structure to the conditional material.
2. Each instance introduces a distinct aspect (or scenario) of either land or slavery laws, consonant with its categorisation as conditional material.
3. The first three instances are precise replications (except, of course for the issue of the vav in v. 25); the fourth occurrence is altered by context to read **וְכִי תִשִּׁיג יָד גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב עִמָּךְ וּמִן אֲחֵיךָ**, the interruption coming from a phrase introducing an ‘outsider’ into the legislation.
4. Even when altered, the rare word **מִן** keeps the phrase unmistakable. It is important to note that the phrase always appears in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular regardless of the number of address of the text surrounding it. Perhaps the most striking example of this tendency is at the beginning of v. 25 where the phrase is sandwiched in between the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural address of v. 24 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of vv. 25b-34.
5. The consistency of the introductory phrase’s address, despite the number changes in the surrounding text, highlights its structural role.

The matter of the *Numeruswechsel* (or alternately, the *Stilwechsel*, as Elliger terms it<sup>81</sup>) as it relates to the introductory phrase will be revisited below.

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<sup>76</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 306; Hubbard, *Goel*, p. 6.

<sup>77</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 424.

<sup>78</sup> Wright, *God’s People*, p. 121.

<sup>79</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 189.

<sup>80</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 424.

### **The Structure of the Interim Years Laws:**

This section is aimed at applying the introductory phrase to the question of the structure of vv. 25-55, and arriving at a proposed reading. There are significant conceptual, grammatical and vocabulary similarities between the four different scenarios delineated by the phrases. Importantly, though, there are only two topics involved (land and slavery) and each topic is comprised of two scenarios. A graphic portrayal of some of the correspondences may provide a framework for the discussion (see following figure 3.1). This graph is designed to present conceptual relationships between the four scenarios rather than explicating grammatical correspondences, which will be addressed below.

Examination of the first and last sections reveals a logical progression paralleled with a grammatical progression. Both panels have in common the main topic of redemption and the legal approach to accomplishing redemption. They differ on the objects of redemption, of course, since they each lie in two different topic sections. Both passages begin with a description of an economic crisis sale, followed by a discussion of the identity of the redeemer. In the first section (v. 26), the redeemer is simply described as גאֵל הַקָּרֵב, “next-of-kin,” whereas within the last section (vv. 48-49) an extremely rare list is found that delineates the familial order of progression for potential kinsman-redeemers.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Elliger, *Leviticus*, p. 339.

<sup>82</sup> N. K. Gottwald, *The Tribes of Yahweh* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979) p. 264.

### **Figure 3.1: Parallel Structure of the Interim Years Laws:**

#### **כִּי יִמּוֹךְ אֲחִיךָ (v. 25)**

- Economically motivated sale of land (v. 25)
- גֹּאֵל plays a role
- Use of יָד (v. 26)
- Instructions regarding price calculations for redemption
- Land released in Year of Jubilee
- Number of address is third person singular

#### **וְכִי יִמּוֹךְ אֲחִיךָ (v. 35)**

- Interpersonal relationship regarding land
- No redemption discussed
- Use of יָד (v. 35)
- Number of address is second person singular
- Injunction to “fear your God”
- Brother is to “live with you”
- Brother is as “resident alien”

#### **וְכִי יִמּוֹךְ אֲחִיךָ (v. 39)**

- Interpersonal relationship regarding slavery
- No redemption discussed
- Number of address is second person singular
- Injunction to “fear your God”
- Servant released in Jubilee
- Brother is to “serve with you” (v. 40)
- Brother is as “hired or bound labourers”

#### **וְכִי ... וְיִמּוֹךְ אֲחִיךָ (v. 47)**

- Economically motivated sale of Israelite into slavery
- גֹּאֵל plays a role
- Use of יָד (v. 47)
- Instructions regarding price calculations for redemption
- Slave released in Year of Jubilee
- Number of address in third person singular



Price calculation methods then follow (vv. 27; 50-52) before the culmination—the mention of the Jubilee release (vv. 28; 54), which infers that Yahweh is the גאל. In the second section, v. 53 contains material germane only to slavery.

The graph below shows the grammatical correspondences of the first and last sections. Milgrom has first observed them,<sup>83</sup> but I have arranged them here in a chart that accentuates both the similar flow of the argument as well as the close correspondences.

First Section: vv. 25-34	Last Section: vv. 47-55
v. 25: כי ימוך אחיך	v. 47: וכי... ומכ אחיך
v. 25: ומכר	v. 47: ונמכר
v. 26: גאלתו	v. 48: גאלה
v. 26: והשיגה ידו	v. 49: או־השיגה ידו
v. 27: וחשב את־שני ממכרו	v. 50: וחשב...משנת המכרו
v. 27: וחשיב את־העדף לאיש	v. 52: ישיב את־גאלתו
v. 28: ואם לא...ויצא ביבל	v. 54: ואם־לא...ויצא בשנת היבל

Of these seven items, only the second and third lines, ‘sells’ (himself) and ‘redemption’ consist of only one word. They are, however, quite significant words in the respective contexts of the two panels. Of the remainder, all are phrases of various kinds, and they provide the flow of the legislation within each panel. Significantly, these two panels occur in the third person singular address, with the exception of the introductory phrases and one word at the end of v. 53 (לעיניך, “in your sight,” a second person singular). In light of this evidence, it seems reasonable to assume with Milgrom that these panels were intended to mirror each other.<sup>84</sup> It is difficult to dismiss the notion of intentional parallels when they correspond through so many

<sup>83</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2232.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

precise phrases.<sup>85</sup> It must also be emphasised, for later consideration, that these two panels are the only ones in which the concept and legislation of redemption appear.<sup>86</sup>

The second and third sections also have a parallel pattern to them. Following an identical introductory phrase, the unnamed Israelite (2<sup>nd</sup> pers. sing.) is encouraged to care for his hard-pressed brother in a specifically prescribed manner. In the first section (vv. 35-38), his needy brother is to be treated as a resident alien. This relation appears to be mimicking v. 23 where God's people are related to him as resident aliens.<sup>87</sup>

In the second section (vv. 39-46), the needy brother's relationship to the unnamed Israelite is described as that of a resident hired worker. The change in terminology is simply due to the details of economic status. If the author wished to maintain the text in parallel, but had used 'resident alien' in the second section, he would have exposed the Israelite to the possibility of a return to ruthless slavery (vv. 44-46), which is the very thing he was trying to prevent.<sup>88</sup>

After establishing how the secure brother relates to the insecure one, both sections proceed to comment on the reverse; how the insecure relates to the secure. He is "to live with you" in v. 36, and "remain" and "serve with you" in v. 40. This is the 'עֲמִיד relationship' that was also introduced in the transitional v. 23. There is some variation among scholars in defining this relationship. Speiser<sup>89</sup> and Milgrom<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>M. J. Boda, 'Chiasmus in Ubiquity: Symmetrical Mirages in Nehemiah 9,' *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 71 (1996) pp. 56-58 lists common errors in analysing rhetorical structures. See also A. B. Luter and M. V. Lee, 'Philippians as Chiasmus: Key to the Structure, Unity and Theme Questions,' *New Testament Studies* 41 (1995) pp. 95-96 for a similarly stringent list of qualifications.

<sup>86</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 2189, 2216.

<sup>87</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 202; Houston, *What's Just?* p. 44.

<sup>88</sup> Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 2220-1.

<sup>89</sup>E. A. Speiser, 'Leviticus and the Critics,' in M. Haran (ed.), *Yehezkel Kaufmann Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1960) p. 38.

take it to mean “under your authority,” which they combine with וַחֲזַקְתָּ in v. 35, a word they claim is interpreted by the context as “and you seize him/lay hold of him,”<sup>91</sup> rather than the usual “you shall support them.” Wright and Hartley, however, prefer the meaning “under my protection.”<sup>92</sup> It is a unique relationship entered into for specific reasons and, in the cases of both sections, it is the relationship rectified by the advent of the Jubilee (v. 41).

Both these panels have the paranetic ‘fear your God’ as a component of obedience to the directives. The order of occurrence of the עַמֶּךָ relationship and the fear of God are reversed between the two panels with “fear” occurring prior to עַמֶּךָ in the first section (v. 35) and after in the second (v. 40). It should be noted that both these sections occur in the second person singular. The grammatical correspondences are not quite as dramatic as within the first and last sections, but are still significant, especially considering the relatively small size of the passages:

Second Section: vv. 35-38	Third Section: vv. 39-46
וְכִי יִמּוֹךְ אֶחֶיךָ (v.35)	וְכִי יִמּוֹךְ אֶחֶיךָ (v. 39)
גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב וְחִי עִמָּךְ (v.35)	כְּשֹׁכֵר כְּתוֹשֵׁב יִהְיֶה עִמָּךְ (v. 40)
וִירֵאתָ מֵאֵל הָיִךְ (v. 36)	וִירֵאתָ מֵאֵל הָיִךְ (v. 43)
אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (v. 38)	אֲשֶׁר־הוֹצֵאתִי אוֹתָם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם (v. 42)

The combination of conceptual relationships (highlighted above<sup>93</sup>), similar progression of argument, and grammatical correspondences (all of which bear similarity to the first and last sections), again make it reasonable to conclude that these two sections were also designed to reflect each other.

<sup>90</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2209 points out that the word is used in this sense throughout the entire chapter. See also Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 537.

<sup>91</sup> Speiser, *Critics*, p. 38; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2206.

<sup>92</sup> Wright, *God's People*, p. 64; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 437. Chirichigno, *Debt Slavery*, pp. 327-8, sees the ‘charitable loans’ given to the poor brother, who is presumably still independent.

<sup>93</sup> See chart on p. 174.

While it begins to appear that the form of the conditional section (vv. 25-55) is a parallelism of sorts, there are yet more steps to take in the structural journey. First, in both topic sections (land and slavery) there are legislative exemptions to the laws presented. The “exceptions” subsections of vv. 29-34 and vv. 44-46 show that the structure actually contains an element of introversion rather than being strictly parallel.<sup>94</sup> In the graph below, the two ‘A’ sections, were suggested to mirror each other, just as the ‘B’ sections were. While this type of structure at first appears to be classic ABBA introversion,<sup>95</sup> the graph below illustrates that the predominant arrangement of the two topic sections is in parallel.

The structure seems to be a rather curious combination of introversion within a parallel form. Any suggestion of a complete or formal introversion (or ‘chiasm’) is halted by the inclusion of the exception subsections. In terms of introversion, their inclusion necessitates a re-working of the nomenclature to ABCCBA (note the letters in brackets below) to establish a chiasm, and that chiasm would make the two non-redemptive scenarios (sections B from the chart below) the centre of the construct. The problem is that there is no reasonable warrant for those scenarios to bear such central import. Instead, the contextual, structural and substantial prominence goes to the concluding formulas in v. 38 and v. 55. Such prominence makes this a parallel structure, albeit a curious one. I would suggest then, that the final structure of the conditional section is as portrayed graphically below:

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<sup>94</sup> Milgrom, *Priestly*, p. 454, cites introversion as significant enough to be an important consideration in making a distinction between P and H.

<sup>95</sup> M. Butterworth, *Structure and the Book of Zechariah*, JSOTS 130 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) pp. 57-61 provides an approach to parallelism and chiasmus identification. W. Warning, *Literary Artistry in Leviticus* (Leiden: Brill, 1999) p. 30, is willing to use even high frequency words to locate rhetorical devices.

<b><u>Land</u></b>	<b><u>Slavery</u></b>
A. Introductory Phrase (vv. 25-28) [A]	B. Introductory Phrase (vv. 39-43) [C]
(Exceptions) (vv. 29-34) [B]	(Exceptions) (vv. 44-46) [B]
B. Introductory Phrase (vv. 35-38) [C]	A. Introductory Phrase (vv. 47-55) [A]
<b>Closing Formula and Motive (land)</b> (v.38)	<b>Closing Formula and Motive (slaves)</b> (v.55)

The grammatical correspondences between the two exception subsections are minimal. There are a few significant words in common, such as ‘buy,’ ‘possession,’ and ‘possession forever,’ as well as a few significant shared ideas, such as the passing along of property to one’s descendants or the permanence of sale. These are important, but are not as notable as grammatical relationships of the other sections.

However, the conceptual correspondence between the exceptions subsections is quite striking. Both meticulously exclude a group or category (dwelling houses in a walled city and non-Israelite slaves respectively) from the overt, first person claim made by Yahweh himself. His claim occurs in the text immediately preceding the exception subsection.

In order to emphasise the importance of the exception and make the exclusion from Yahweh’s claim unmistakable, each section includes the use of a very rare word to stress the regulation. In the land exceptions, the word used is לַצִּמְתָּה, usually

rendered ‘in perpetuity.’<sup>96</sup> Its basic meaning is ‘unto annihilation.’<sup>97</sup> This word appears only twice in the OT, both occurrences here in the topic section of land.<sup>98</sup> It occurs first in v. 23, where Yahweh makes his claim, and forbids the sale of his land ‘in perpetuity’ or, literally, “without right of redemption.”<sup>99</sup> The word appears again in v. 30, where a dwelling house in a walled city is specifically exempted from the perpetual ownership claim by Yahweh. For one year after the sale of the house it is eligible for redemption. After that year, it is the new owner’s house ‘in perpetuity’—the Jubilee cannot restore ownership. The exception is followed by a clarification, or in other words; the exception is followed by an exception to the exception.<sup>100</sup> The Levites’ homes (which would have been within a walled city) were not to be sold without permanent right of redemption.

In the slavery exemptions (vv. 44-46), the exception is the provision that allows for the purchase of non-Israelite slaves as permanent possessions, which is in stunning juxtaposition to v. 42 where God had addressed the topic. There, God had claimed that his people were his slaves by rights of the Exodus, and they were not to be sold to anyone else as such. The exception subsection allows that permanent (or chattel) slaves could be purchased from the surrounding nations or from the resident aliens in Israel’s midst. They could be bequeathed to Israelite descendants as

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<sup>96</sup> J. N. Oswalt, ‘צמרת,’ in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 3: 819, defines it as “forfeiture of the right of repurchase.” Oswalt sees the word as denoting ‘silence’ in a permanent way.

<sup>97</sup> J. E. Hogg, ‘The Meaning of צמרת in Lev. 25:23-30,’ *The American Journal of Semitic Languages* 42 (1925/26) p. 208.

<sup>98</sup> The LXX evidence is the same with the words βεβαιωσις (v. 23) and βεβαιως (v. 30) being used only here. Wevers, *LXX*, p. 414 explains that here the word means “with legal validity,” understanding all sales as provisional on the Jubilee. Cf. M. Dijkstra, ‘Legal Irrevocability (lō’ yāsûb) in Ezekiel 7.13,’ *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 43 (1989) pp. 110-1.

<sup>99</sup> Hogg, *Meaning*, p. 210.

<sup>100</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 204.

property, or נִכְסֵי, (v. 46). This is surprising, because before this, every mention of resident aliens in Leviticus had been positive. They were to be treated the same as natives according to 19: 34; assumed to be subject to Israel's law in the same way as native Israelites in 24: 22; Ex 12: 49; Num 9: 14, 15: 16; used as an object lesson for God's relationship with his people in v. 23, and as an ideal for inter-Israelite relations in v. 35. Here, they were 'sold out,' as it were.

Immediately following God's claim (v.42) comes a command in v. 43 that destitute Israelites not be treated 'ruthlessly.' This rare word occurs three times in the discussion of slavery (vv. 43, 46, 53), once in Ezekiel 34 and, significantly, describes Pharaoh's treatment of the Israelites in their Egyptian slavery in Exodus 1:13-14. The word is used twice in Lev 25 in identical phrases (לֹא-תִרְדֶּה בוֹ בַּפֶּרֶךְ) located at the end of v. 43 in the main body of the section and then, again, at the end of the exception subsection in v. 46. Israelite slaves (who were really resident hired workers) were again exempted from the harsh rule of chattel slavery to which resident aliens and slaves from the surrounding nations were implicitly subject.

### **Summary:**

Though a bit detailed, this study has shown that there is good reason to read the laws of Lev 25:8-55 as carefully structured, exhibiting a high degree of literary parallelism and correspondences. The unconditional laws of vv.8-12 are joined to the conditional laws of vv. 14-17 and this combination is duplicated by the unconditional laws of vv. 18-22 with the conditional laws of vv. 25-55. The meat of the chapter, vv. 25-55, has its own structure, revealed by the introductory phrase.

To this point in the chapter, the main intent was to propose an alternate reading to the "Descending Stages of Poverty" reading of Lev 25. In doing so, the close ties that Wright and Milgrom had forged between the socio-economic scenarios

and the interpretation of the Jubilee have been relaxed. The purpose of the following sections is to investigate how this new reading informs our understanding of the social relationships, the economic scenarios and the rationale for the Jubilee.

### **The Numeruswechsel/Stilwechsel:**

The *Numeruswechsel* has frequently been used by scholars in the source-critical search for “seams” in the text that show where one source has been joined to another.<sup>101</sup> Joosten explains the presupposition behind the search:

...the underlying ideas being that an author would retain the same grammatical number while addressing an audience, and that a later redactor would preserve the grammatical number used in his sources.<sup>102</sup>

This search has led to widely divergent conclusions. On the one end is the complexity that Elliger envisions, with five stages of textual development and eight redactors.<sup>103</sup>

On the other end is Noth, who acknowledges that the variation of address probably betrays stages of textual development, but concludes:

The element of instruction with direct address predominates, but the intermingling of singular and plural address points to a gradual development whose separate stages can, however, no longer be distinguished.<sup>104</sup>

Joosten lists three problems with a search based on source-critical presuppositions. **First**, there are numerous examples of non-composite codes, both biblical and from the Ancient Near East that contain a mixing of styles. **Second**, the results of source analyses based on changes in address number are often at odds with analyses based on other linguistic criteria. **Third**, the recent tendency in biblical studies is to look at the final form of the text, rather than source dissection.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, pp. 425-7 provides a thorough summary of the issue.

<sup>102</sup> Joosten, *Holiness*, p. 47.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 184.

<sup>105</sup> Joosten, *Holiness*, p. 47. An example can be seen with Budd, *Leviticus*, p. 340, and Fager in *Land Tenure*, pp. 123-5.



Two other reasons may be added to Joosten's list. One is that the presupposition he described above is both tenuous and circular. The assumption that a redactor maintained the author's style of address throughout his work can only be proven by discerning the sources demarcated by the author's style, and those can only be located by assuming the redactor did not change the style of address! The second additional reason is that Gerstenberger and Joosten have both noted in Leviticus the same functional, homiletic use of the *Stilwechsel* as a communication device, similar to what Lohfink had noticed in Deuteronomy.<sup>106</sup> The device permits the writer to alternate between addressing a collective group and an individual within the collective.<sup>107</sup>

At this point, the *Numeruswechsel* becomes very relevant to the interpretation of the Jubilee. Gerstenberger attempts to combine the idea of textual development with the idea of a homiletic device and thereby tries to read Lev 25 as though it were two conflated documents, one plural and one singular:

The plural section seems to be focused on the basic elements and on a few individual points such as the Day of Atonement, [God's] assurance to the congregation, provisioning of food, and ownership of slaves. The larger, singular sections with direct address are different... They individualize the addressee, or focus from the very outset on a concrete individual case, quite apart from the congregational assembly itself.<sup>108</sup>

Gerstenberger supposes that the objective third-person laws belong to a third textual stratum, which is concerned with redemption of land and Israelite slaves.<sup>109</sup>

Hartley also perceives a conflation, but of a different type; he combines the introductory phrase and the *Stilwechsel*, positing that the laws marked by the

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<sup>106</sup> Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 372; Joosten, *Holiness*, p. 48 reviewing N. Lohfink's work in *Das Hauptgebot: Eine Untersuchung literarischer Einleitungsfragen zu Dtn 5-11*, *Analecta Biblica* 20 (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1963) pp. 239-241.

<sup>107</sup> Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 373.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

introductory phrases were taken from various locales in the Priestly Code and then arranged and augmented by two different editors who preferred two distinct styles of address.<sup>110</sup>

Joosten attempts another explanation of the variations in address. While he agrees with Lohfink that the *Stilwechsel* is functional, he proposes that the intended addressees of a given style in P are exactly opposite from Deuteronomy.<sup>111</sup> Lohfink argues that in Deuteronomy, the second person plural is the individualising, personal mode of address and that the second person singular is the neutral mode of address to the community. Joosten claims the reverse is true in Leviticus, though he admits that some passages are more difficult to harmonise with his thesis than others.<sup>112</sup> He concludes: “This means we may read an individualizing nuance into verses employing the singular even when they give no indication of it.”<sup>113</sup>

The point of contact of this topic with the Jubilee is that the number of address signals the target audience. The audience is either communal or individual, which is not necessarily the same as the clan or father’s house. However, there is yet a third possible audience to be discerned.

Joosten shows “that certain notions are consistently associated with either singular or plural.”<sup>114</sup> Words or concepts belonging to the people as a whole (the collective) occur in the second person plural. His example for this collective use is אֲנִי. Predictably, words that address issues revolving around the individual receive the second person singular form. His example here is אַתָּה. Of particular interest for

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<sup>110</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 426.

<sup>111</sup> Joosten, *Holiness*, p. 48.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid. The most difficult spot for his theory concerns 25:6-9, which is the end of the Sabbatical and beginning of the Jubilee laws. Joosten calls it an ‘anomaly’ (p. 50), in that it appears to fit the Deuteronomy style better.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 49.

the Jubilee is the occurrence, within the ‘individual’ group of the familial word אָנְס, “brother.” Joosten argues that the singular suffix carries the literal (sibling) meaning, while the plural refers collectively to the people of Israel.<sup>115</sup> Chirichigno also argues that אָנְס is used in the wider, national sense in Lev 25.<sup>116</sup> Japhet expands this study by noting the word may also have a third, ‘tribal’ sense. Thus, there are *three* levels of meaning the word may convey: the individual sense; the communal sense as defined by family or tribe; and the communal sense defined by “people,” as in the “Israelites.”<sup>117</sup>

Japhet proceeds to note and discuss the data that reveals that this widest sense of national identity is very rare in the Holiness Code, and yet frequent in Lev 25. Her list of occurrences in Lev 25 is: vv. **25**, **35**, 36, **39**, 46, **47**.<sup>118</sup> I added the bold typeface to indicate where the introductory phrases occur. Japhet’s argument is that the writer, because of the “special requirements of this particular section,” used the word אָנְס as a device to expand the people’s concept of tribal responsibilities up onto the national level. Thus, the relationships of an extended family are a microcosm of what the entire nation should be.<sup>119</sup> Ringgren agrees with the theological concept of extension as he avers: “With the extension of the idea of brotherhood to all fellow tribesmen

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>116</sup> Chirichigno, *Debt-Slavery*, p. 329.

<sup>117</sup> Japhet, *Manumission*, p. 75; H. Ringgren, ‘אָנְס,’ in G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren (eds.) D. E. Green, trans. *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974) pp. 189-90. However, V. Hamilton, ‘אָנְס,’ in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 1:345-6 notes the first two senses but not the third. He lists the occurrences in the category of ‘kinsman,’ a step below tribal members.

<sup>118</sup> Japhet, *Manumission*, p. 76.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid. p. 77.

and fellow countrymen came also the increased demand for solidarity.”<sup>120</sup> They are suggesting that the use of אָנְכִי in Lev 25 was a deliberate technique to provoke a new way of thinking about the relationship of tribal ethics to the nation.

The proof offered by Japhet for her theory is that there is a “constant differentiation between the Israelite and the foreigner,” which influences both the slave and land redemption laws.<sup>121</sup> Since the second person singular usage of אָנְכִי used in the introductory phrases (אָנְכִי אָנְכִי) is addressed to an individual within the collective, Japhet’s explanation is that those uses are employed to instruct the collective community about the extended responsibilities the individual has to the solidarity of the whole.<sup>122</sup>

### **Summary:**

The application of this matter to the Jubilee is important for three reasons. **First**, it means that consideration must be given to the likelihood that the relationship the redemption/Jubilee laws intend to protect is national—that of membership in Israel, i.e. membership *in the people of God*. That intent does not negate involvement of clans and father’s houses, but it does suggest a foundationally theological rationale in the legislation that governs their involvement. Primarily, the ethical injunctions (at least in the conditional section of vv. 25-55) are for an *individual* brother to protect another *national* brother. This argument is especially strengthened by v. 47, which is concerned with an Israelite sold to a non-Israelite.

**Second**, it follows that the ethical demands of both the redemption and Jubilee laws (by virtue of their cohesion in the text) were incumbent only for the society of

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<sup>120</sup> Ringgren, אָנְכִי, p. 192.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. p. 76.

<sup>122</sup> The two other occurrences of אָנְכִי in vv. 36, 46 are not as conspicuous as the introductory phrases but their meaning is consistent with them.

Israel. A non-Israelite was only impacted by the laws of Lev 25 if, in some way, he became associated with the society of Israel. This point must be allowed its full impact in setting the boundaries for using the Jubilee in matters of normative ethics. It appears to me that ethical legislation specifically applied to Israel as a stringently bordered society can only be applied outside that boundary with solid justification. But there will be more on that topic in the final chapter.

**Third**, this explanation of address change is helpful in that it supports the proposed structural reading of Lev 25 suggested above. It is to this support that we turn to in the next section.

### **The Structure of Lev 25 and the *Numeruswechsel*:**

The intent of this section is to present evidence that supports my suggested chapter structure for Lev 25. When the chapter structure is matched with the *Stilwechsel*, the result is a large measure of agreement between the two. The step-by-step description below is presented graphically (fig. 3.2) at the end of this section.

After the very recognisable opening formula of v.1, Moses is told to address the community and in v. 2, we find the plural address, as we would expect from Joosten's theory. The perplexity Joosten expresses at the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular in vv. 6-9<sup>123</sup> can be explained by Milgrom's observation that these verses form an inclusio by the use of אכל in v. 6 and 7.<sup>124</sup> Included within these 'bookends' are seven categories of people or animals, all of which revolve around the (individual) owner. Therefore, the solution is that the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural Joosten expects (due to אר) is overruled by the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular demanded by the intentionally individualised inclusio of vv. 6-7. Thus, the *form* of his theory appears to be violated while the *function* of it is being

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<sup>123</sup> Joosten, *Holiness*, pp. 52-53.

<sup>124</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2159.

upheld by the style of address. However, an explanation for v. 8 is elusive. I also would expect the verse to be in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural, but it is not. Joosten's cautious words against over-applying his theory are cogent.

Nonetheless, the suggested section breaks of the chapter dovetail with the change in address style. A change from plural to singular occurs at the section break in v. 14 and although a few plural forms are scattered throughout, the passage fits both the theory of Joosten and Gerstenberger's homiletic idea. The concluding formula in v. 17 is a mix of the number of address. **וַיִּרְאוּ מֵאֵל ה'יך** is 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular in its occurrences; **אֵלֵהֶיכֶם כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה** is 1<sup>st</sup> person/2<sup>nd</sup> person plural in all its instances (vv. 17, 38, 55). The 1<sup>st</sup> person/2<sup>nd</sup> person plural address continues on in vv. 18-24.

The next section change occurs at v. 25, which is the start of the conditional, interim years laws that are structured by the introductory phrases—which are always in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular. After the first introductory phrase, the entirety of vv. 25b-34 is written in the casuistic, 3<sup>rd</sup> person. This large block of legislation heightens Elliger's observation that even when the casuistic style (**וְאִישׁ כִּי־יִמְכֹר**) occurs elsewhere in vv. 29-34 (vv. 26, 29), the writer carefully avoids any duplication of the introductory phrase.<sup>125</sup>

The next *Stilwechsel* occurs at the second introductory phrase (v. 35) and the entire section continues on in the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular until the concluding formula in v. 38, which is (predictably) in the 1<sup>st</sup> person/2<sup>nd</sup> person plural. Verse 39 initiates both the next section and *Stilwechsel*, reverting to the 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular used before the conclusion of v. 38. There is a 1<sup>st</sup> person/3<sup>rd</sup> person insertion in v. 42, which is unique

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<sup>125</sup> Elliger, *Leviticus*, p. 337.

to the chapter, but it serves to emphasise the difference between an Israelite and foreign slaves in the subsequent legislation.

The second exceptions paragraph (vv. 44-46) contains style changes that are difficult. The first part of v. 44 is 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular, and then switches to 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural. Though the variations here do not contradict Joosten's theory, they are not well explained by it either.

The final section, vv. 47-55, mimics its counterpart, vv. 25-28, by beginning with the introductory phrase and then switching to the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. The sole 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular word, לַעֲיִיךָ, occurs at the very end of v. 53. The conclusion of v. 55 is the expected 1<sup>st</sup> person/2<sup>nd</sup> person plural number.

Although not every problem is solved by this approach, the level of agreement between the *Stilwechsel* and the proposed chapter structure is quite striking and lends credence to a reading that sees the number of address helping to convey an intentional message. The critical point of all this data, however, remains that the explanation of “brothers,” as noticed by Japhet, is indicative of a “national” relationship. In the following section, I hope to show that the national relationship is to be interpreted theologically.

### **Resident Alien/Sojourner:**

The task in this section is to further investigate the idea of a brother (אָח) in Lev 25 being an Israelite, which, conversely, means that the resident alien/sojourner is a foreigner. The goal of this section is to demonstrate that these categories show how the theological and social angles should relate to each other.

**Fig. 3.2**

**Matching the Structure and the Numeruswechsel in Lev 25:**

v. 1: Opening Formula	
vv. 2-7: The Sabbatical Year	2 <sup>nd</sup> per. sing. changes to 2 <sup>nd</sup> pers. pl.
vv. 8-12: The Jubilee: unconditional, general directives	v. 8-2 <sup>nd</sup> per. sing. changes to 2 <sup>nd</sup> pers. pl. 2 <sup>nd</sup> pers. pl.
v. 13: Transitional verse	change in v.14 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> pers. sing
vv. 14-17: Interim Years: conditional directives	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> per. pl. mix
v. 17: Closing Formula & Motive	Continuation of 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> per. pl. mix
vv. 18-22: The Jubilee: unconditional, general directives	Continuation of 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> per. pl. mix
vv. 23-24 Transitional verses	
vv. 25-55: <b><u>Interim Years:</u></b> conditional directives:	vv. 25-55: <b><u>Interim Years:</u></b> conditional directives:
<b>Land:</b>	
A. Introductory Phrase (vv.25-28)	2 <sup>nd</sup> per. sing. changes to 3 <sup>rd</sup> per.
Exceptions (vv. 29-34)	Continuation of 3 <sup>rd</sup> pers.
B. Introductory Phrase (vv. 35-38)	2 <sup>nd</sup> per. sing. changes to 2 <sup>nd</sup> pers. sing.
Closing Formula & Motive (v. 38)	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> per. pl. mix
<b>Slavery:</b>	
A. Introductory Phrase (vv. 39-43)	2 <sup>nd</sup> per. sing. changes to 2 <sup>nd</sup> pers. sing. and 3 <sup>rd</sup> per. mix
Exceptions (vv. 44-46)	2 <sup>nd</sup> per. sing. changes to 2 <sup>nd</sup> pers. sing
B. Introductory Phrase (vv. 47-55)	2 <sup>nd</sup> per. sing. changes to 3 <sup>rd</sup> per.
Closing Formula & Motive (v. 55)	1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> per. pl. mix



The frequent occurrences of both the noun גֵּר (sojourner) and the verb גָּר (to sojourn<sup>126</sup>) in Lev 25 (vv. 6, 23, 35, 44, 45, 47) indicate the importance of the concept for the interpretation of the passage. Milgrom makes a convincing argument that the use of גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב in Lev 25 constitutes a hendiadys. The word תוֹשֵׁב consistently appears alongside other words, namely גֵּר and שֹׁכֵּיר.<sup>127</sup> Knauth suggests that the translation “resident alien” for גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב is similar to the translation “resident hireling” for שֹׁכֵּיר תוֹשֵׁב (another social category in Lev 25).<sup>128</sup>

Milgrom points out that the term גֵּר exists independently, which only indicates that the person is alien, whereas גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב emphasises that the alien has taken root and settled in the community.”<sup>129</sup> Milgrom’s argument for a hendiadys provides sufficient confidence to accept Kaufmann’s basic definition of גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב: “The ger of P is a free man, a foreigner who has settled in the land of Israel and has been assimilated culturally and hence religiously.”<sup>130</sup>

There are two things to note in this definition. First, the sojourner was not ethnically an Israelite. Milgrom correctly insists that the social status of the sojourner was not established by socioeconomics.<sup>131</sup> deVaux argues that by defining the sojourner as someone from a different nation or race, the Canaanites themselves

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<sup>126</sup> R. Martin-Achard, ‘גֵּר, גָּר,’ in E. Jenni and C. Westermann (eds.) M.E. Biddle, trans. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997) 1: 307.

<sup>127</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2187;

<sup>128</sup> R. J. D. Knauth, ‘Alien, Foreign Resident,’ in T.D. Alexander and D. W. Baker (eds.) *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003) p. 27.

<sup>129</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2187.

<sup>130</sup> Joosten, *Holiness*, p. 57, n. 152 where he is quoting Kaufmann. See Neufeld, *Prohibitions*, pp. 391-394 for a full description.

<sup>131</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, pp. 1494-5.

became resident aliens when the Israelites conquered the land.<sup>132</sup> Immigrants from other countries then simply swelled the ranks. Some scholars have posited that the biblical emphasis on the גֵּר came about due to an influx of people into Judah as a result of a significant historical event, such as the fall of Samaria or the exile.<sup>133</sup>

My interest in the concept, however, lies in its import as a biblical-theological theme, as both the patriarchs and the nation experienced life as resident aliens.<sup>134</sup> In fact, scholarly discussions generally acknowledge two categorical uses of גֵּר in the OT: 1) to describe Israel's experiences among foreigners and 2) to describe a foreigner's experiences within Israel.<sup>135</sup>

Each of the patriarchs in Genesis is both designated and presented as a resident alien. When the status of גֵּר is then extended to the nation because of their time in Egypt, the definition of resident alien becomes even more significant. Knauth points out that Israel's awareness of its resident aliens status was part of the national self-understanding.<sup>136</sup>

The resident alien belonged to the socioeconomic class of those requiring assistance. Other members of this group were the Levites, widows and orphans (Deut

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<sup>132</sup> R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1965) 1:74

<sup>133</sup> C. van Houten, *The Alien in Israelite Law* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991) pp. 154-5. See also Knauth, *Alien*, p. 27; F. A. Spina, 'Israelites as gerim, 'Sojourners,' in Social and Historical Context,' in C. Meyers and M. O'Connor (eds.) *The Word of the Lord Shall go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983) pp. 329-330; See Joosten, *Holiness*, pp. 56-7 for summaries and criticisms of some of the argument's variations.

<sup>134</sup> T. M. Mauch, 'Sojourner,' in G.A. Buttrick (ed.) *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1962) 4:397; R. B. Herron, 'The Land, the Law, and the Poor,' *Word and World* 6.1 (1986) p. 79; Martin-Achard, גֵּר, p. 309. Cf. in the NT 1 Peter 2:11.

<sup>135</sup> J. R. Spencer, 'Sojourner,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 6:103-4; Knauth, *Alien*, pp. 28-9; Spina, *Sojourners*, p. 321.

<sup>136</sup> Knauth, *Alien*, p. 26

14:29). Within this group, the resident alien enjoyed equal legal protection, but, in return, there were religious demands made of him, to the extent that deVaux can claim: “In everyday life there was no barrier between gerim and Israelites.”<sup>137</sup>

Milgrom, however, argues persuasively that the resident alien had neither the exact same obligations nor privileges.<sup>138</sup> An important example of that statement being that, according to Jubilee law, the גֵּר could not own permanent property in Israel.

Milgrom’s assessment of the resident alien’s status is that they were required to obey the prohibitive commandments but were not compelled to obey performative ones. For example, the alien could not transgress the prohibitions against worshipping other gods or blaspheming Yahweh (Lev 24:16). In contrast, though he was able to participate in the religious life of Israel, the alien was not compelled to obey the performative command of becoming circumcised, which was necessary in order to partake of the Passover meal.<sup>139</sup>

Also, the resident alien in Israel lacked extended family connections and was landless due to residence in a foreign land.<sup>140</sup> These two concerns, the lack of family and land are precisely the issues the Jubilee legislation addresses. Lev 25:10b reads:

“It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family.”

It appears then, that Lev 25 compares Israel to resident aliens because their national experience as such so closely mirrored the resident alien’s concerns. Those concerns are the same concerns of the Jubilee. This is a common interpretation, and one that is most often found expressed in comments on v. 23.

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<sup>137</sup> deVaux, *Israel*, p. 75.

<sup>138</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, p. 1496.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid. p. 1499.

<sup>140</sup> Knauth, *Alien*, p. 28. An alien could ‘own’ property in the interim years, see Lev 25:47.

However, it was mentioned above that the remarkable import of Lev 25:23 lies in its role of defining a theological relationship. The statement of v. 23: "...with me you are but aliens and tenants" (גרִים וְתוֹשְׁבִים) provides a foundational understanding of "resident alien" derived both from Lev 25 and also as a biblical theme. The statement of v. 23, then, must be held as explicit guidance from the writer as to how the idea of resident alien is to be interpreted within Lev 25.

What becomes apparent from this method is that the resident alien appears in Lev 25, *without exception*, in terms of a relationship—the previously mentioned עֵמֶךָ relationship. This relationship is frequently mentioned in Lev 25.<sup>141</sup> In every place the resident alien is discussed, the עֵמֶךָ relationship appears alongside it.<sup>142</sup> This is a signal that the proper ordering of אֶחָד (insider) and גֵּר וְתוֹשֵׁב (outsider) relationships is critical to the proper functioning of a well-structured, theologically sound society.

It seems to me that the key to understanding these relationships is the frequent, idiomatic use of יָד (hand, power<sup>143</sup>). In vv. 14-17, it was argued that the rules for property transactions revolved around proper function, rather than oppression. These transactions are described using this idiomatic expression (מִיַּד עַמִּיתְךָ, lit. "from the hand of your neighbour"). The expression is used again in v. 25 to describe an Israelite who had been financially compelled to sell property but would be able to redeem it back should יָדוֹ הִשְׁיִיגָה, "his hand strengthen or prosper."<sup>144</sup> The failing

<sup>141</sup> A form of it occurs in vv. 6, 23, 35, 36, 39, 40, 41, 45, 47, 50, 53, 54.

<sup>142</sup> The combination occurs in vv. 6, 23, 35, 47 (2x). עֵמֶ also appears in v. 40 with כְּשֹׁכֵר וְתוֹשֵׁב.

<sup>143</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2233 and Levine, *Leviticus*, pp. 175-6 define the uses as idiomatic.

<sup>144</sup> See Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2205; M. Dreytza, 'יָד,' in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 2: 402-5.

hand occurring in v. 35 (וּמַטֵּה יָדוֹ) must also mean that the brother's financial circumstances have changed. Hubbard and Levine both argue that the 'failing hand' phrase of v. 35 lends precision to what is actually signified by the introductory phrase וּכִי־יָמוּךְ אָחִיךָ.<sup>145</sup> The failing hand of the poor brother in v. 47 is juxtaposed with the strengthened hand of the resident alien (וְהַזָּרִיג יָדוֹ). It appears, then, that in Lev 25, it is the strengthening or the failing of the hand that alerts us that a change in the financial situation of a brother (or a resident alien) has occurred.

It does not appear, however, that what the legislation is primarily concerned with is either the financial stability of an individual Israelite, nor the protection of the clan. Rather, the focus is on the individual's theological status, as it was expressed in v. 23, and that it remains unaltered by socioeconomic fluctuations.<sup>146</sup> The legislation aims to protect the theological relationship, which is expressed within the socioeconomic categories of land tenure and slavery.

Put simply, when a brother experiences a change in his financial situation, the text will demonstrate a secondary interest on the impact upon him and his clan. What is most important, though, is that the financial change (signalled by יָד) suffered not be allowed to alter the theological status of the brother. The socioeconomic structures and the processes of Jubilee and redemption are aimed at protecting the relationship of every Israelite with their God.<sup>147</sup>

We see, then, in vv. 25-28, an Israelite brother who is compelled to sell part of his inheritance due to a change in his financial situation, the causes of which are immaterial here. Redemption is necessary in this situation because the sale of אֶחָדָם,

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<sup>145</sup> Hubbard, *Goel*, p. 7; Levine, *Leviticus*, p. 178.

<sup>146</sup> This is consonant with the intent of vv. 14-17.

<sup>147</sup> There is provision made in Lev 25 to restore the financial situation of the impoverished brother, whether by redemption or by the Jubilee.

even a part of it (v. 25), is a threat to the theological relationship of v. 23. The land was a gift from Yahweh, and the solution to the threat comes initially from the redemption provided by family members. It is widely agreed that the purpose of land redemption was to keep the family property intact within the family.<sup>148</sup>

If the land was given to an Israelite by Yahweh, and the land was subsequently lost, what are we to say of his status before Yahweh but that it also was threatened? Westbrook notes this issue:

“But the law contains no sentimental regulations that the kinsman should assist the needy by keeping the property *for his person*. If he has not the strength to keep it for himself, he must lose it. The centre of gravity passes from him to a relative; he loses in importance what the relative gains, but the family, as family, loses nothing. The property is not left to chance, but remains in the kindred with which it is familiar.”<sup>149</sup>

The lack of information concerning the redeemer’s handling of redeemed property may not be a legislative lacuna. Rather, keeping the land and the impoverished brother within the family preserves his theological status—he remains a member of the family to which the land was given. Whether or not the property is retained or returned is an inter-family matter, germane only to themselves.<sup>150</sup> The over-arching issue is that by whatever means, be it the redemption of kinsmen (the preferable method), or self-redemption, or failing those, the Jubilee, the impoverished brother’s theological status is protected.

This interpretation of the **ד** and **עמך** relationship necessitates reviewing some of the difficult questions and issues that revolve around land redemption. For example, did the redeemer keep the redeemed property until the Jubilee to recoup his

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<sup>148</sup> See Milgrom, Leviticus 23-27, p. 2192;

<sup>149</sup> Westbrook, *Property*, p. 60, quoting Pederson from his book *Ancient Israel*.

<sup>150</sup> E. A. Martens, ‘On Land and Lifestyle,’ in B. C. Ollenberger (ed.) *Old Testament Theology: Flowering and Future* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004) p. 237 suggests the “...unfortunate Israelite would still in all likelihood be working for the benefit of his kinsman.”

expenditures or did he return the land to his impoverished brother? If the **לֹאִם** retained the land, why the urgency to redeem since it would revert, if left unredeemed, to the clan and the impoverished brother at the same time, namely the Jubilee?<sup>151</sup> Why, then, was it so important to keep the land within the clan? This question is further complicated by the fact that the life expectancy of an Israelite would mean that few people affected by these laws would live until the return of their land at the Jubilee.<sup>152</sup>

Plausible answers have been provided for these questions. Eichrodt posits that the redemption laws serve to prohibit a land speculation that would hurt the peasantry.<sup>153</sup> Wright suggests that keeping the land within the family protects the brother's descendants from the fate "...to suffer in perpetuity the consequence of the economic collapse of his generation."<sup>154</sup>

Wright argues that while the intent of redemption is to keep land within the **בֵּית**, the intent of the Jubilee is to restore the land to the household.<sup>155</sup> His insight is instructive, but it appears to me that for three reasons the two strands of legislation (Jubilee and redemption) cannot be so cleanly separated.

1) The final recourse for land restoration lies in the redemption provided by the Jubilee itself, which is, in effect, Yahweh acting as redeemer.<sup>156</sup>

2) When the interpretation of the strengthening or failing hand is taken into account, the separation of the redemption and Jubilee laws becomes more difficult—the **וְ** expression occurs in both types of law!

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<sup>151</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 189 thinks the redeemer returns the property; Wright, *God's People*, p. 120 and Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2195 think the redeemer retains it; Westbrook, *Property*, p. 60 is unsure.

<sup>152</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 317; Lohfink, *Poverty*, p. 49; Lemche, *Manumission*, p. 50.

<sup>153</sup> Eichrodt, *OT Theology vol. I*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>154</sup> Wright, *God's People*, p. 124. This, however, is what the Jubilee would do.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Hubbard, *Goel*, p. 12.

3) It is difficult to use the two strands of law as an interpretive tool for the laws in vv. 25-55 marked by the introductory phrases because only the first and last cases make provision for redemption.

The scenario of an Israelite sold to a non-Israelite in vv. 47-55 closely resembles the sold land scenario.<sup>157</sup> The introductory phrase once again signals a brother's financial failing, this time to the strengthened hand of the resident alien. In selling himself,<sup>158</sup> the Israelite has become עֶבֶד to a resident alien rather than maintaining his עֶבֶד relationship to Yahweh as described in v. 23. Hubbard explains the conflict this situation creates:

“Put simply, redemption amounts to an institutional Exodus in Israel. On the one hand, it perpetuates the first liberation—that from Egyptian slavery—within later, settled Israel. It frees her from unending servitude to later Pharaohs within her own ranks. On the other, each instance of redemption amounts to a fresh moment of divine liberation—as it were, a miniature Exodus.”<sup>159</sup>

Thus, similar crises result from the loss of either the land or one's freedom. This similarity is probably the reason for the striking resemblances in the conceptual and linguistic parallels demonstrated above.

Milgrom has noted that two sections, vv. 35-38 and vv. 39-46 do not contain provisions for redemption. These two passages are steps two and three in his theory of descending steps of destitution.<sup>160</sup> Milgrom correctly identifies when redemption is necessary:

“The required intervention of the redeemer when his kinsperson sells himself to a non-Israelite (vv. 48-49) indicates that the text's silence concerning the redeemer in stages 2 and 3 is intended to mean that he is not required to redeem. A possible reason for his exemption has been presented above. It is

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<sup>157</sup> Hubbard, *Goel*, p. 9.

<sup>158</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 2219-20 argues that this must be of economic compulsion.

<sup>159</sup> Hubbard, *Goel*, p. 11; See Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2234.

<sup>160</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2191.



based on a principle of law, not on the redeemer's whim: redemption, which allows the redeemer to retain possession to the jubilee, applies to only sold land and enslaved Israelites, not to monetary debt.”<sup>161</sup>

If the concern of redemption were that of the clan protecting or restoring the financial state of its members, it would be expected that some relief measures would have been provided for the two middle cases of the conditional laws in vv. 25-55. These two cases were far more severe economically than the partial sale of inherited land. However, no redemption is offered in these cases. Thus, when Milgrom argues in stage two (vv. 35-38) concerning the brother: “Technically he has lost his land” and “...in a sense, he rents the land from the creditor,”<sup>162</sup>—a solution of redemption is anticipated. But redemption is not prescribed!

The reason mere monetary debt does not call out for redemption, even in the severity of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> introductory phrases, is that in these two middle situations, the socioeconomic circumstances pose no threat to the stated theological relationship of v. 23! Instead of redemption, the brother is to be treated as a resident alien (v. 35). Milgrom explains that this means the brother lives in his own home and works the fields of his inheritance (now owned by someone else) and pays off his loan from the yield. The brother is helped by interest free loans (which is a practice different from a non-Israelite resident alien) and thereby “lives” by the concern of his brothers.<sup>163</sup>

This appears to be an extraordinary case of *imitatio Dei*.<sup>164</sup> The impoverished brother is in the exact same relation to his kinsman as the Israelite is to Yahweh; he is a resident alien living on his benefactor's land. Redemption is not required because

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<sup>161</sup> Ibid. p. 2217.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. p. 2205.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. pp. 2206-9.

<sup>164</sup> Hubbard, *Goel*, p. 11; Cf. Rodd, *Glimpses*, p. 75; W. J. Houston, ‘The Character of YHWH and the Ethics of the Old Testament: Is *Imitatio Dei* Appropriate?’ *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 38.1 (2007) pp. 10-14.

the theological relationship is secure within the people of God. The theological relationship must be kept secure by the community of “insiders.”

In vv. 39-46, a slightly different response to an impoverished brother than the *imitatio Dei* is needed—it is not feasible for two reasons. First, the brother has completely lost his land and must enter his creditor’s household.<sup>165</sup> Land has been removed from the equation, thereby removing any possibility of an Israelite imitating God as described in v. 23. Second, the imagery of imitation provided in v. 23 is broken because a resident alien could be taken into perpetual slavery (vv. 44-46) even though an Israelite could not. The imperative, then, is that the impoverished brother be maintained in a theologically acceptable status, כְּשָׂכִיר כְּתוֹשָׁב or ‘resident hireling,’ and receive a wage, which enables him to pay off his debt and escape his financial woes.<sup>166</sup>

The significance of this matter is what prompts the sudden interjection of Yahweh v. 42, where he claims the Israelites cannot be slaves to anyone but him. While the text insists that an Israelite could not be a עֶבֶד to any but Yahweh, the phrase לֹא־תִרְדָּה בּוֹ בַּפֶּרֶךְ (“You shall not rule over them with harshness”) is used twice (vv. 43, 46), which recalls the abusive treatment by Pharaoh of his Israelite slaves (Exod 1:13-14). The Israelite master was prohibited from treating his Israelite charge in like manner. This language strongly suggests that the writer well understood the actual situation of the impoverished brother. However, if brother was ‘employed’ by brother, and was not a landless עֶבֶד, the socioeconomic category did not threaten the theological relationship.

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<sup>165</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2212, 2221

<sup>166</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2216; contra Fager, *Land Tenure*, p. 102.

The theory that Lev 25 is concerned with the protection of the theological relationship also contributes to the interpretation of the exceptions sections. Levites must have redemption available for their city homes because the cities were their inheritance among the ‘brotherhood’ of Israelites (v. 33). Loss of their houses would alter their theological status, parallel to a member of another tribe losing land. That is a difference between the non-Levite and the Levite; for the former, they could not lose land, for the latter, it was the city that maintained the theological relationship.<sup>167</sup>

Similarly, the slavery exception in vv. 44-46 did not protect non-Israelites surrounding the land or living within it. They were outside the theological relationship of v. 23 and thus may be enslaved in perpetuity. The degree of protection afforded a circumcised גֵּר, who had effectively become a convert to the Israelite religion, is an interesting question the text does not address.<sup>168</sup>

### **Chapter Summary:**

The goal of this chapter was to present a different way of reading Lev 25. The plentiful textual data of the chapter was reviewed in some detail and an attempt was made to weave it together. In doing so, it became evident that the literary structure of the chapter has quite a bit to say as to the interpretation of the chapter. Perhaps the most significant discovery was that the changes in the number of address coincide with the structural order of the chapter.

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<sup>167</sup> J. Milgrom, ‘The Land Redeemer and the Jubilee,’ in A. B. Beck (et al.) *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of his Seventieth Birthday* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995) p. 67; also Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2203.

<sup>168</sup> See Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2231; A. H. Konkel, ‘גֵּר,’ in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) 1:836-9; H. R. Cole, ‘The Sabbath and the Alien,’ *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 38.2 (2000) pp. 223-9.

It is the theological relationship described in v. 23 that is key to the chapter, and it is the number of address that is the organising principle. The *Numeruswechsel* shows that the targeted audience is not the clan, nor the father's house. Rather, it is an unnamed, generic Israelite, within the nation, whose task it is to make sure that no Israelite brother loses his theological standing with Yahweh. To equip him to do this, the tools of generosity, *imitatio Dei* (in terms of v. 23), diligent oversight (v. 53), no-interest loans, and employment (v. 40) are given. There can be little doubt that, as Wright says, this activity was enacted primarily on the level of the clan and father's house. The argument of the chapter, however, was that the intent of all the socioeconomic activity was the protection of the theological relationship given to the *nation*, as God's people, and to each individual member (or **יִשְׂרָאֵל**) within it.

The sequential reading of the text as a descent into destitution remains useful, but primarily as a reading that enhances the understanding of numerous details within the legislation. I suggest, rather than reading the text sequentially, that we understand redemption in Lev 25 as chiefly concerned with the protection of the theological relationship, expressed in v. 23, of the Israelite **יִשְׂרָאֵל** as being a resident alien to Yahweh, and living on Yahweh's land. They are laws that apply to the interim years, between Jubilees. Every Israelite's relationship with Yahweh was restored on the 50<sup>th</sup> Yom Kippur, and it was protected during the following Jubilee period by the process of redemption (provided mainly by the clan) and then restored again at the next Jubilee. The Jubilee, then, is not an override of the redemption laws, it is the ultimate redemption law.

This conclusion, then, is in harmony with that of the last chapter. The point of the redemption laws and the Jubilee laws is to provide the legislation necessary to arrive at the completion of the Jubilee period in right relationship to Yahweh. In the

case of the social angle, that means that all horizontal relationships and land issues are to be brought back to how they were on the day Israel entered the land. At that point, the restoration is accomplished and the trumpet blast signals an inauguration of the new Jubilee period.

**Chapter Four:**  
**The Economic Angle**

The last angle to be considered is the economic. This angle is foundational, in that it provides the logical cohesion for the Jubilee. For Wright, land tenure is the content of the economic angle as it relates to the Jubilee. As a consequence, this angle is as distinctive as the Jubilee itself and provides an enormous amount of conceptual unity to the Jubilee legislation. At the same time, it lacks the same amount of textual data and detail the other angles enjoy.

The aim of this chapter is more typological than the preceding two. Land tenure, which is the topic in this chapter, is the discussion of the rules and relationship of a tenant on the land of his Lord. Land tenure, and its periodic restoration, is a discussion of the Israelites in the Promised Land. As such, it is a discussion, which fits into the major biblical theme of land restoration—which extends from the Garden of Eden to the entry into the Promised Land. This chapter reasons that the restoration of Jubilee pictures the restoration that comes at the entry to the land—it is, in effect, a return to Eden.

### **Wright's Economic Angle on the Jubilee:**

As was noted earlier, Wright views the Jubilee essentially as an economic institution.<sup>1</sup> For him, the economic angle is, at its core, the matter of Israel's land tenure in the Promised Land.<sup>2</sup> Land tenure is the foundational issue in the interpretation of the Jubilee because it encompasses both the slavery and land issues; the goal of the Jubilee was not only to free every Israelite but also to restore him, with his family, on their inherited plot of land.

However, the majority of the discussions on the Jubilee are not actually focused on land tenure but deal, rather, with other topics which surround and build upon the tenure issue. This is true of Wright in his discussions of the Jubilee—the

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 291; idem, *OT Ethics*, p. 199.

social and theological angles receive more of his attention. His assessment that the topic of land tenure lies at the core of the Jubilee is absolutely correct.

### **Biblical Evidence Regarding Land Tenure**

Wright sees land tenure as based on the three-level kinship structure discussed in the social angle.<sup>3</sup> He cites several places in the OT that demonstrate this kinship-land tenure relationship. Numbers 26 is referenced, where the land dispersal follows the lengthy delineation of the clans within each of the tribes.<sup>4</sup> Wright also points to Joshua 13-21, where the tribal land divisions of towns and territory are delineated, and territory boundaries are given for each tribe. Individual families are addressed within this section (cf. Josh 19:10).<sup>5</sup> Lastly, Wright points to Judges 21: 24 as evidence that land division was tied to the kinship structure of tribe, clan, father's house:

So the Israelites departed from there at that time by tribes and families, and they went out from there to their own territories.

Wright has substantially proven his assertion regarding the link between land tenure and social structure.<sup>6</sup>

### **Land Tenure in Israel**

Wright has discerned two distinct features that differentiate Israelite land tenure from the tenure practices of the Canaanites. The first distinction is that of **equitable distribution**.<sup>7</sup> In Canaan, the king (and nobility) were the landowners. The citizens of Canaan were his tenants, responsible for the use of his land.

Within Israel, Wright argues, land tenure was originally intended to ensure that the land was distributed as widely as possible among the population—divided, of

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<sup>3</sup> See pp. 149-150.

<sup>4</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 200.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 291.

<sup>7</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 291; idem, *OT Ethics*, p. 200.



course, according to the size of the groups within the three tiers of the kinship system.<sup>8</sup> To possess a piece of the Promised Land had deep theological implications:

For the Israelite, living with his family on his allotted share of YHWH's land, the land itself was the proof of his membership of God's people and the focus of his practical response to God's grace.<sup>9</sup>

The resident alien did not have this assurance.<sup>10</sup> This difference between Israelite and alien is illustrative of the theological issues noted in the last chapter concerning resident aliens and Israelite brothers.

The second distinction of Israelite land tenure was the **inalienability of the land** given to an individual household.<sup>11</sup> Land was not to be treated as an asset to be sold or profited on, precisely because of its theological import.<sup>12</sup> Land was to remain in the possession of the household to which it was given. Wright points to the story of Ahab and Naboth's vineyard in 1 Kings 21 as an example of inalienability.<sup>13</sup>

#### **Assessment of Wright's Economic Angle:**

Wright correctly identifies the importance of land tenure for the Jubilee. It is the essential element of Lev 25 where the legislation is aimed at protecting the various aspects of land tenure and correcting any disruptions of an Israelite's land tenure. Land tenure is the base component of the Jubilee that provides cohesion to all the rest of the Jubilee legislation.

It would be difficult to improve on Wright's argument about the economic angle. He has clearly connected the theological significance of land and land tenure to the social structure of Israel. In doing so, he has connected the vertices of his triangle in a convincing way.

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<sup>8</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 291.

<sup>9</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 201; idem, *Mission*, p. 292.

<sup>10</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 202.

<sup>11</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 200; idem, *Mission*, p. 291.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 292.

In this chapter I would like to explore beyond where Wright has taken us. Specifically, I want to ask *why* land tenure had such deep theological meaning—what did living on the land mean? Here, two other questions come to mind. First, what significance does the Sabbatical (vv.1-7) bring to this issue, for it too is concerned with treatment of the land? Second, are there clues within the text of Lev 25 that can help identify any larger, biblical-theological themes that, in turn may help to illuminate the Jubilee? Or, perhaps, is it the Jubilee that illuminates the themes?

### **Israel and the Land:**

The foundational truth is this: the reason land tenure is so important to the Jubilee is because the land was so important to Israel. The last chapter demonstrated the intimacy of the relationship was between the Israelite, his land, and his God. As it is with agrarian cultures, the land was the nation's life.

The topic of land is especially prominent in the law, and this prominence began with the story of Eden. Though the land became cursed, and mankind was alienated from the land, the story of the land moves quickly to an early crescendo with the promises made to Abraham in Gen 12-22.<sup>14</sup> The land was not delivered to Israel within the literary confines of the Pentateuch, but rather came during the “entry stories” in the book of Joshua.<sup>15</sup> The multi-faceted significance of the land gift to Israel has been investigated in a very considerable body of literature.<sup>16</sup> The statement

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<sup>14</sup> Alexander, *Promised*, p. 129.

<sup>15</sup> G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 2, D. M. G. Stalker, trans. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1965) p. 319. Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 78.

<sup>16</sup> Wright, *God's People*, pp. 24-43; idem, *OT Ethics*, pp. 76-99, 182-211; J. L. Townsend, ‘Fulfillment of the Land Promise in the Old Testament,’ *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1985) pp. 320-337; H. M. Orlinsky, ‘The Biblical Concept of the Land of Israel: Cornerstone of the Covenant between God and Israel,’ in L. A. Hoffman (ed.) *The Land of Israel: Jewish Perspectives* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986) pp. 27-64; W. Brueggemann, *The Land*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002); N. C. Habel, *The Land is Mine* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995);

of Yahweh, “The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine” (Lev 25:23), plays a particularly significant role in the study of the land topic—as it is the quintessential statement of Yahweh’s ownership of the land.

Because the topic of land is so broad in OT studies, I would like to explore one specific question: Why are the Jubilee and Sabbatical years (which are both concerned with fallow and land tenure) juxtaposed in Lev 25? Perhaps the reason is that the land is inextricably bound together in relationship with the people of Israel, who are covenantally bound to Yahweh. That reason reveals that the Sabbatical and the Jubilee are cyclical restorations of the pristine condition of the covenant relationship that existed at the time of entry into the Promised Land—a “*restitutio in integrum*.”<sup>17</sup> That first moment of entry is the starting point—year zero—for the counting of years necessary to determine the recurrent Sabbaticals and Jubilees. This initial “fresh start” of the entry may itself have a deeper theological significance—that of an image of a typological return to Eden as the original pristine state.<sup>18</sup>

The ‘entry phrase’ in Lev 25:2, כִּי תָבֹאוּ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ (“when you come into the land”) supports this idea. The phrase occurs eleven times in the law,<sup>19</sup> and the topics associated with the phrase are remarkably similar to the concerns of Lev 25.

The phrase is often concerned with matters of food within the Promised Land.<sup>20</sup> These food concerns are actually quite specific but the relationship of the land and its bounty to Yahweh is the focus.<sup>21</sup> Quite often, there are significant theological

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<sup>17</sup> Noth, *Leviticus*, p. 183; N-E. Andreason, ‘Recent Studies of the Old Testament Sabbath,’ *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 86 (1974 ) p. 462.

<sup>18</sup> J. Neusner, *Handbook of Rabbinic Theology* (Leiden: Brill, 2002) p. 332. See particularly chap. 11 titled “What, Where, and When is Eden?”

<sup>19</sup> Lev 14: 34; 19: 23; 23:10; 25:2; Num 15: 2; 15:18; 33: 51; 34: 2; 35:10; Deut 18: 9; 26:1.

<sup>20</sup> Lev 19: 23; 23:10; Num 15: 2, 18; Deut 26:1.

<sup>21</sup> Wenham, *Numbers*, p. 127.

issues joined to this concern, such as the Firstfruits principle, Edenic imagery, or creedal statements.<sup>22</sup> This food concern is also evident with both the Sabbatical (vv. 1-7) and Jubilee (vv. 11-12, 19-22) regulations.

The entry phrase also occurs in a number of places where the displacement of the land's non-Israelite inhabitants by the entering Israelites is discussed.<sup>23</sup> On the one hand, there is discussion of the proper method for incorporation of strangers (Num 15:13-14), while on the other hand, instructions are given for the eradication of the Canaanites (Num 33:15; Deut 18:9). Similarly, the Jubilee exhibits a concern for the proper understanding and treatment of strangers (vv. 23, 35, 47) as well as the concern to maintain the ethnic distinction of a non-Israelite (vv. 45-46).<sup>24</sup> The Sabbatical also invokes ethnic distinctions—strangers are included in the demands of the seventh year (v. 6), whereas the Jubilee specifically excludes non-Israelites from its demands (v. 10).<sup>25</sup>

The entry phrase is employed in passages describing the apportionment of the land to its inhabitants.<sup>26</sup> This interest is expressed by legislation calling for the parcelling of land to the tribes (Num 33: 51f; 34:1-15) and the establishment of the geographically centred cities of refuge.<sup>27</sup> These same concerns are also evident in the Jubilee, as the concept of land tenure is central to the laws of Lev. 25—both land and

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<sup>22</sup> As examples, Neusner, *Eden*, pp. 338-342, makes the case for the fruit tree of Lev 19: 23 referring to Eden, and Deut 26:1 flows immediately into the creedal statement of v. 5 that was so integral to von Rad's thought, see G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, vol. 1, D. M. G. Stalker, trans. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1962) pp. 121-8.

<sup>23</sup> Num 33: 51; Deut 18: 9

<sup>24</sup> For a fuller discussion, see chapter three.

<sup>25</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2171.

<sup>26</sup> Num 34: 2; 35:10.

<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that Lev 14: 34 is an anomaly, though it does speak of houses in, presumably, cities (see Wenham, *Leviticus*, pp. 211-2).

city. The Sabbatical expresses concern over שְׂדֵךְ (your field), as the ownership of land is an important topic in that legislation as well.

One interpretive advantage, then, that the entry phrase provides is that it aligns the concerns of the Sabbatical and the Jubilee with those of the entry, and thus, Noth's description of the Jubilee as a *restitutio in integrum* can be confidently extended to the entry into the land.

Another advantage gained by the entry phrase is that it requires, at a foundational level, viewing the entry not only as a focal point of the Sinai legislation (the entry phrase occurs in Lev 25 immediately after בְּהָרִי סִינַי, “on Mount Sinai”), but also as a fulfilment of the third and last promise to Abraham (the others being blessing and posterity).<sup>28</sup> Hartley points out that this same idea of fulfilment is fundamental to Lev 25 where the land is given as an inheritance because Israel is entering its covenant with Yahweh.<sup>29</sup> In this sense, there is an eschatological hue to the entry into Canaan; it is the completion of previous promises while it is also the start of the year-by-year counting, indicative of a new life in the land. Thus, the entry shares the basic nature of the Jubilee, which is that of an eighth-day inaugural event.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, it is of little surprise that the entry into the land coincided with another יוֹבֵל event—Jericho.

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<sup>28</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 78; J. Milgrom, ‘Covenants: The Sinaitic and Patriarchal Covenants in the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-27),’ in C. Cohen, A. Hurvitz and S. M. Paul (eds.) *Sefer Moshe: The Moshe Weinfeld Jubilee Volume* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2004), p. 95; G. von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, E. W. T. Dicken, trans. (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1965); Alexander, *Paradise*, p. 129; Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 302; Cf. W. D. Barrick, ‘The Eschatological Significance of Leviticus 26,’ *The Master’s Seminary Journal* 16.1 (2005) p. 113.

<sup>29</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 437.

<sup>30</sup> See above, pp. 121-134.

### Sabbath and the Return to Eden

Presumably, the imagery of Eden drawn from the beginning of the Old Testament has exercised considerable influence over the Edenic imagery at the end of the New Testament. This “bookending” imagery of *Eden created, then lost, and then recreated*, is important to the interpretation of the Jubilee. Indeed, it appears to be the theological underpinning to the idea of land tenure.

Two significant articles that address the return to Eden theme are Neusner’s “What, Where and When is Eden?” and Och’s “Creation and Redemption: Towards a Theology of Creation.”<sup>31</sup> The arguments of these authors can be distilled into three points that revolve around the ideas of Sabbath and Eden.

**First**, these works provide for some clearly drawn definitions. Eden, Neusner says, is the perfect *condition* that occurred on the seventh day. It is not simply a location from where the four rivers flowed, but a condition of wholeness and divine satisfaction.<sup>32</sup> Och concurs, pointing out that the seventh day is immediately preceded by the statement that all of creation was “very good”—the structures of the world were as God intended them.<sup>33</sup> Genesis 2:1-3 was the one day in world history when all was well and *shalom* reigned. And because that day is actually a condition (and a relational one at that), it is repeatable and restorable. It can occur at any time or at any place as long as the *condition* is met.<sup>34</sup>

This statement, of course, requires some qualification. Eden, like its antitype the Promised Land, is obviously a geographical location. However, the significance of both locations within the OT story lies predominantly in their imagery. The image of

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<sup>31</sup> B. Och, ‘Creation and Redemption: Towards a Theology of Creation,’ *Judaism* 44.2 (1995) pp. 1-17. For Neusner, see n. 5.

<sup>32</sup> Neusner, *Eden*, p. 331.

<sup>33</sup> Och, *Creation*, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Neusner, *Eden*, p. 331.

Eden is inextricably linked to the unsullied perfection of the seventh day. Similarly, the image of the Promised Land is evocative of Israel living in close communion with Yahweh, when his promises are fulfilled and his Tent is in their midst (although the cherubim still guard his presence). The ultimate import of these locations for the OT is not geographical but theological. The theological meaning is the reason that the symbols endure—and why the study of the land is so extensive in biblical studies.

Och points out that the pristine condition of Eden was destroyed by Adam's sin and because of it, Eden changed from a state of relationship and blessing to a state of alienation and curse. The subsequent story of the OT is that of the conflict to restore the pristine state of the seventh day over the de-creational forces of sin.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the seventh day can be viewed as the prototype of the Sabbath which Yahweh unveiled at Sinai. The ordering of Israelite society around the Sabbath is an attempt through the covenant to restore Eden.

**Second**, the authors point out that the entry into the land of Canaan is an Edenic moment, comparable to Adam entering the garden.<sup>36</sup> Och writes:

Settlement in the land of Canaan has creational implications: the abundance of Canaan cancels the curse which God has placed on the earth as punishment for Adam's act of disobedience. The earth which was condemned to barrenness and infertility now reverts to its original state of fruitfulness and productivity.<sup>37</sup>

The significance here is that, by connecting the curse reversal to the entry, Eden and the entry are conceptually linked to the Jubilee: "...the object is restorative: recovering the perfection in the beginning, even in the division of the Land."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Och, *Creation*, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Neusner, *Eden*, p. 332.

<sup>37</sup> Och, *Creation*, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> Neusner, *Eden*, p. 334.

**Third**, the authors, particularly Och, point out that the covenants are stages (or forward moves ) in the advance of the narrative towards the reinstatement of the Edenic condition.<sup>39</sup> It is the power of the covenant that effects the return to Eden:

Creation and redemption belong together as the obverse and reverse of the same theological coin; they are dynamically interrelated aspects of God’s plan for the world. Creation is the end; redemption is the means.<sup>40</sup>

This interrelationship brings clarity to the ideas of Sabbath/Eden and the Exodus, which are the two dominant images of the ideal condition, not only in the Jubilee legislation but also in the recitations of the Decalogue (Exod 20 and Deut 5). The fact that both images are integral to the Jubilee is a clear indication that the intent behind the Jubilee is not simply socio-economic redistribution, but the restoration of the pristine condition of the quintessential day! This restorative intention explains the occurrence of the eighth-day re-creative concept within the legislation. It also brings clarity to the “already...not yet” structure of the Jubilee (the legislation depends on the previous Jubilee for some of its counting but also anticipates the coming Jubilee for other counting). The Sabbath shares the same past-future accounting structure, as each Sabbath recalls the original seventh day of the garden and yet anticipates the final, fulfilled restoration.<sup>41</sup>

Significantly, the same restorative intent also fully exposes the idea of a **יובל**

“encounter” between God and Israel, as Och points out:

The theophany at Sinai masks the culmination and fulfillment of God’s creational plan. The encounter between God and Israel at Sinai can be seen as a return to beginnings, an iterative event which is a reenactment of the original encounter between God and man at Eden.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> This view is evident as Och discusses Noah and Abraham as precursory covenants to Sinai—which he regards as the ‘main event.’ See Och, *Creation*, pp. 5-11.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 11.



I would suggest, then, that the Jubilee is a cyclical, intermediate יובל encounter. It is a type-scene event, meant to recall the patriarchal promises whose fulfilment began at the time of the nation-forming theophany of Sinai (the first יובל event) and were completed the culminating/inaugurating theophany at Jericho (the last יובל event). The entry was the final fulfilment of the promises to Abraham and it inaugurated new life in the land. Unlike those one-time יובל events, the Jubilee was to continue as a recurring testimony (much like the Sabbath) that a future, full restoration was coming.

The return theme provides the logic as to why the restoration of inherited land and the freedom of servitude to Yahweh are so important within the Jubilee legislation. The task now is to investigate the text of Lev 25 to see if the data there reveals the Edenic, restorative theme.

### **7 Recipients of Food in 25: 6-7:**

Another reflection upon the original Edenic state can be seen in the listing of the recipients of the land's Sabbatical bounty in vv. 6-7. Both the list and the manner of its presentation reflect back to the blessing and provision of Genesis 1: 29-30.

Milgrom has noticed the sevenfold listing of the recipients of the Sabbatical bounty.<sup>43</sup> They are: 1) לך ("to you"); 2) ולעבדך ("to your male servant"); 3) ולאמתך ("to your female servant"); 4) ולשכירך ("your hired labourer"); 5) ולתושבך ("your resident labourer"—apparently here referring to a foreigner, <sup>44</sup>הגרים); 6) ולבהמתך ("your cattle"); 7) ולחיה ("the wild animals"). While Milgrom notes these seven recipients, and yet argues that ולשכירך ולתושבך is a

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<sup>43</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2159.

<sup>44</sup> Levine, *Leviticus*, pp. 170-1.

hendiadys, which would effectively reduce the list to an unsymbolic six.<sup>45</sup> Milgrom's arguments on this matter are, admittedly, cogent (especially concerning the occurrence of the same words in 25:40<sup>46</sup>). However, the symbolic use of the number seven in the text makes the interpretation of these two words as two separate categories a better reading. Kleinig notes that these two terms are better read as a set, in parallel to the terms for male and female slaves.<sup>47</sup>

Another literary element is the fixing of the preposition ל to each category of recipient (except the final one), accomplishing at once delineation and symbolic repetition. The meaning behind this literary device is that, while all who reside in the land of Israel are affected by the covenantal requirements of the Sabbatical, they are also recipients of the covenantal bounty (cf. vv. 18-22), which is demonstrated in the land during the Sabbatical.<sup>48</sup>

This same agricultural bounty, as well as the literary presentation of a recipient list is evident in the Garden of Eden story in Genesis 1: 29-30. There we find a shorter list:

- 1) הָאָרֶץ וְכָל-חַיָּתָהּ ("to every beast of the earth")
- 2) הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל-עוֹף ("to every bird of the air")
- 3) וְכָל רֹמֵשׁ עַל-הָאָרֶץ ("to everything that creeps on the earth")
- 4) אֲשֶׁר-בּוֹ נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה ("everything that has the breath of life")

This list, of course, also comprised everything that resided in Eden at that time, which was placed under man's dominion (v. 28). The context of v. 29 reveals that these are the declared recipients of the bounty of God's garden. Similar to Lev 25, each of the list's members has the preposition ל attached to it (except the final

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<sup>45</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2161.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 2221.

<sup>47</sup> Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 537.

<sup>48</sup> See Hartley, *Leviticus*, pp. 433-434.

one). That said, it is yet another element of the Gen 1 list which cements the Edenic imagery in Lev 25. Both lists are framed by the word לֹאֲכַלְהוּ (Gen 1: 25,30; Lev 25: 6,7). The recipient list from Eden, it would appear, served as the major influence for the recipient list of the Sabbatical, in both form and concept.

### **The Link Between 25:1-7; 18-22 and 26: 3-13**

Another connection between Sabbath and Eden (and the covenant) is provided by the intertwining of Lev 25:1-7;18-22 and 26: 3-13, which also reference the provision of food. Some of the corresponding concepts occur in Lev 26, and so we must ask if it is legitimate to investigate matters that span the two chapters.

One reason for investigating both chapters together is that the mention of Sinai in both 25: 2 and 26: 46 form an inclusio of the two chapters. A number of scholars, ranging over the centuries from Rashbam to moderns, have held this view.<sup>49</sup> Much of the reason for this interpretation is due to the jarring change in 25:1 to the book's frequent introductory formula וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר.<sup>50</sup> The insertion of Sinai is only the second geographical reference in the formulas (the other being at the Tent of Meeting in 1:1). The point here is that the introductory formula in Leviticus is static enough that any variation seems to disclose some intention.

When the location of revelation suddenly changes in 25:1 from the Tent of Meeting to Sinai, the question of intention becomes relevant. ibn Ezra has given the most plausible answer, in noting that the laws in these chapters (which he compares to the laws of incest in 20:22) are weighty enough to warrant exile for their

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<sup>49</sup> Rashbam, *Leviticus*, p. 149; K. Elliger, *Leviticus*, p. 343; Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 433; Lowery, *Sabbath*, p. 58; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2342-3.

<sup>50</sup> This precise formula occurs 26 times in Leviticus. There are a further 9 occurrences with slight deviations: 10:8 addresses Aaron only; 11:1; 13:1; 14: 33; 15:1 include Aaron with Moses; 16:1 recalls the tragedy of chap. 10; 21:1 simply leaves off לֵאמֹר.

transgression.<sup>51</sup> Milgrom concurs, and expands the argument by noting the connection between the negligence of Sabbatical observance and expulsion (cf. 26: 34-35).<sup>52</sup> To be certain, the stringent ethical demands of Lev 25, and the terrible consequences of their disobedience in Lev 26, are heightened by the inclusion of Mt. Sinai in the introduction.<sup>53</sup>

The conceptual unity of Lev 25-26 is also evidenced by a number of linguistic similarities. Many of these are found in 26: 3-13. However, these verses cannot be interpreted as discussing the Sabbatical *per se*, because 26: 3-13 speak of the blessings to follow covenant fidelity within the land. The connection between the passages that explains the similarities is more likely to be some umbrella theme large enough to connect the already dominant themes of Sabbath, land, Eden and the covenant. The best option appears to be that the entry/return/restoration of the land symbolises an Edenic return—which is the result of Sabbatical (25:1-7) and covenantal fidelity (26:3-13), respectively. The evidence from the text leads on to the realisation that the connections between the passages extend beyond the inclusion of Mt. Sinai (or even that of the Sabbatical described below). Lev 25:18-22 adds to the evidence with its similar phrases and content. There are three observations, which can be made in support of the connection between 25:1-7; 18-22 and 26: 3-13.

The **first** observation to be made is that 25:1-7 is linked to 25:18-22. This appears rather obvious, given the phrase in v. 20: “Should you ask ‘What shall we eat in the seventh year?’” Indeed, Gerstenberger has argued that vv. 5-7 have been ‘awkwardly’ separated from vv. 20-22 by an editor.<sup>54</sup> The explicit connection is accompanied by other similarities as well: the emphasis on the counting of years (vv.

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<sup>51</sup> ibn Ezra, *Leviticus*, p. 37.

<sup>52</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2323. See below concerning שָׁבֹת.

<sup>53</sup> Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 300; Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 300.

<sup>54</sup> Gerstenberger, *Leviticus*, p. 379.

3-4, 20-22), the land providing/yielding food (vv. 6, 19, 21),<sup>55</sup> and the multiple occurrences of תבואתה (vv. 3, 7, 21, 22).

The **second** point that supports a connection is that while vv. 18-22 clearly addresses the Sabbatical, they also address the double-fallow occurring at the seventh Sabbatical year and the Jubilee.<sup>56</sup> The Sabbatical and the Jubilee are closely related in Lev 25, both by their nature and by the counting of years—a view that is axiomatic among Leviticus commentators. As Kiuchi notes: “The implicit logic is, if the Lord’s blessing on the seventh year is such, how much more on the year of Jubilee!”<sup>57</sup> Measured simply by the amount of space devoted to it, the topic of the divine, abundant provision of food has the place of primacy in connecting the Sabbatical and Jubilee (cf. vv. 11-12).

The **third point** is that a connection between passages is supported by the number of similarities between 26: 3-13 and 25:18-22. These may be delineated as follows:

a) The condition of covenantal obedience is stated (25:18; 26:13). The covenant is the key to Edenic-like provision and security.

b) Milgrom points out that living securely on the land (25:18, 19; 26:5) is the opposite of exile (implying another link for an inclusio for Lev 25-26).<sup>58</sup> Both are results: of covenantal fidelity, or the lack thereof. Additionally, the word בַּטָּח,

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<sup>55</sup> The combination of six-year counting and bountiful provision has caused a number of commentators to recall the similar excess of manna on the sixth day (Exod 16:22). However, the manna instructions revolved around a Sabbath law not revealed until Sinai! See Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 305; Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2180; W. Brueggemann, ‘Theme Revisited: Bread Again!’ in J. C. Exum and H. G. M. Williamson (eds.) *Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honour of David J. A. Clines*, JSOTSup 373 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003) pp. 76-89.

<sup>56</sup> Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, p. 438.

<sup>57</sup> Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, pp. 438-9.

<sup>58</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2179.

“securely,” is used in other OT contexts to demonstrate the results of covenantal blessing.<sup>59</sup>

c) The idea that the abundance resulting from covenantal obedience (25:19; 26: 5) would allow the Israelites to “eat your fill” implies a state of life that is different than the seventh or 49<sup>th</sup> year, which occurs by legal fiat, not as a result of obedience. The author implicitly posits that an Edenic return is only possible through the covenant.

d) In 26: 9, Yahweh promises (as his response to covenantal fidelity) to bless and multiply his people, which is an explicit reflection back to Gen 1, as well as many preceding passages. In 25:18, there is likewise a promise of blessing (also in response to covenantal fidelity), which will result in the “multiplication” of crops for his people.

e) The same phrase, יִנְתַּן הָאֲרֶץ (‘‘the land shall yield’’) occurs at 25:19 and 26: 4. Clearly, the provision of food is in view, and this is the blessing promised in all three passages. Rooker states:

The superabundance of the land’s productivity in 26:10 is similar to that of the abundant fertility of the land in the sabbatical year and in the year of Jubilee (25: 22).<sup>60</sup>

f) Provision is also the focus of the statements in which the old, stored grain is sufficient to sustain the Israelites during the fallow years (25: 22). That sustenance will be a sign to them of God keeping the covenant blessings (26:10).<sup>61</sup>

The point of these multiple connections and similarities is to demonstrate that the divine blessing of the produce of the land is simultaneously tied to the Sabbatical,

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<sup>59</sup> J. Oswalt, ‘בטח,’ in R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer, Jr., B. K. Waltke (eds.) *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980) 1:102; Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 304 n. 324; Levine, *Leviticus*, p. 211 n.18.

<sup>60</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 314 n. 364.

<sup>61</sup> Kiuchi, *Leviticus*, p. 473.

the Jubilee and covenantal fidelity. There must, then, be a larger, encompassing theme that each of those elements are part of, and to which they individually point. Again, the most likely theme is that of the reversal of the land's curse in Gen 3:17-19—the restoration of the land's blessed bounty. As a consequence of Gen 3, any hope of a return to Eden can only come through the power of the covenant—and that is why obedience to the laws of Lev 25 is so critical. And we shall see, this is also the point of the following “return to Eden” motifs found in the Lev 25-26 inclusio.

### **Wild Animals and Food**

The mention of wild animals (חַיִּי) in 25:7 provides a definite connection between the story of Eden and Exodus 23:10-12, Lev 25 and Lev 26: 6, 22. These passages contain the covenantal blessings and curses regarding wild animals. This connection demonstrates that the state of the relationship between Yahweh and Israel is decipherable by noting the state of the relationship between Israel and the wild beasts. When Israel is out of balance in her covenantal relationship, the wild animals are violent and in opposition.<sup>62</sup> Conversely, when Israel is in harmony with Yahweh (and such is the case in the Sabbatical) the wild animals pose no threat.<sup>63</sup> There is also ample evidence from the OT that this “relationship indicator” extended to mankind outside of Israel's covenant as well.<sup>64</sup>

The paradigm for the tripartite interaction (Yahweh, Israel, animals) is found in Genesis 1-3. In 1: 24, the creation of the wild animals (וַחַיִּי הָאָרֶץ) is described and then immediately reiterated in 1: 25 (אֶת־חַיֵּי הָאָרֶץ). The animal creation is

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<sup>62</sup> See Lev 26: 22; 1 Kings 13:1-28; 20:35-36; 2 Kings 2: 23-25; Ezek 14:15, 21; 33: 27.

<sup>63</sup> See Exod 23:10-11; Lev 25: 2, 26: 6; Isa 11:1-9; 35: 9; 43: 20; Ezek 34:1-10; 25.

<sup>64</sup> See Gen 9: 2; 2 Kings 17: 26; Jer 27: 6-8; Jer 28:14; Dan 2: 38; 4:1-37; Zeph 2:14-15.

declared good (v. 29). Man is introduced into the equation in v. 28 when God gives him dominion over what he has created (וּבְכָל-חַיָּה) and dominion is again repeated in v. 30.<sup>65</sup> The order is established as man exercises his derived authority over creation, and specifically over the wild animals. This order, unlike the view of many modern commentators, is declared “very good” in v. 30.<sup>66</sup>

Creation as originally intended is a harmony inconceivable in the post-diluvian world—humanity as regents of God rule in peace over creatures who live in peace.<sup>67</sup>

However, in Gen 3:14, it all goes awry. The serpent who deceived is singled out and cursed from among the cattle and the חַיֵּת הַשָּׂדֶה. The beasts of the field are land animals and not necessarily wild animals.<sup>68</sup> However, despite the lack of direct reference to include the other animals in the curse of Gen 3:14, the effect of the curse upon the wild animals is clear from Gen 9: 2 (עַל כָּל-חַיֵּית הָאָרֶץ) where even the Noahic covenant cannot reconcile man and beast—as the latter retains the dread of man earned by the “Fall.”<sup>69</sup> Thus, the relationship between man and animal becomes contentious as man loses his dominion over the animals.

This tension elucidates the activity of Yahweh within the Sinai covenant. Either he protects Israel from wild beasts (Lev 26: 6), or he employs the wild beasts as instruments for judgement (Lev 26: 22—a reversal of the Garden conditions of Lev

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<sup>65</sup> The NRSV has apparently picked up on this emphasis and followed the Syriac here by inserting חַיֵּית into v. 26.

<sup>66</sup> See S. A. Reed, ‘Human Dominion over Animals,’ in W. Kim, et al, *Reading the Hebrew Bible for a New Millennium* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press, Int., 2000) pp. 328-9.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. p. 334, where he quotes W. Houston.

<sup>68</sup> N. Kiuchi, ‘חַיֵּית,’ in W. Van Gemeren (gen. ed.) *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997, 2:113

<sup>69</sup> J.P. Heil, ‘Jesus with the Wild Animals in Mark 1:13,’ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 68 (2006) p. 63.



26: 3-13). Both of Yahweh's actions reflect the condition of the relationship between he and the Israelites.<sup>70</sup> Ramban states:

And according to Rabbi Shimon who says that He will cause them to cease from causing harm, the verse is stating: "and I will cause the evil of the beasts to cease out of the Land." This is the correct interpretation for when [Israel] observes the commandments, the Land of Israel will be like the world was at its beginning, before the sin of the first man, when no wild beast or creeping thing would kill a man, just as the Rabbis have said: "It is not the wild ass that kills, but it is sin that kills."<sup>71</sup>

The evidence found within the Sabbatical legislation plays a role in this paradigm, because of its Edenic imagery. Not only does the Sabbatical bring harmony once again as the wild beasts peacefully co-exist with man,<sup>72</sup> but the two parties also share the same agricultural bounty as Eden—also provided by Yahweh.<sup>73</sup> Man and beast, created together on the sixth day, return in the seventh year to the state of the Garden by partaking of the produce together. This harmony is also seen in Exod 23:11 (though there again the *חַיִּית הַשָּׂדֶה* are named). The "return to Eden" imagery of man and beast in harmony, together eating Yahweh's provision, is ultimately tied to the covenant which demands the Sabbatical. That harmony, then, is an indicator of the status of the relationship.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Contra Levine, *Leviticus*, p. 171 where he says the beasts symbolise "freedom."

<sup>71</sup> Ramban, *Leviticus*, p. 456.

<sup>72</sup> J.W. Van Heuten, 'The First Testing of Jesus: A Rereading of Mark 1.12-13,' *New Testament Studies* 45 (1999) p. 354. Contra Heil, *Jesus*, p. 65. See also Bacchiocchi, *Redemption*, p. 154ff.

<sup>73</sup> K. Nielsen, 'Construction of Meaningful Contexts: On War, Lions, Dogs, Birds and a Vineyard,' *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 21 (2007) p. 220.

<sup>74</sup> The wilderness era ends in Joshua 5:12 with circumcision and the Passover celebration followed by the land's bounty replacing manna.

### 7 Occurrences of שבת

Abravanel noted, according to Milgrom, that there were seven occurrences of the word שבת in Lev 25:1-7.<sup>75</sup> Milgrom also notes that there are seven occurrences of שבת in Lev 26: 34-35,<sup>76</sup> with the final occurrence being perceptible in an unpointed Hebrew text: the Masoretes, however, have vocalised the word as a Qal infinitive form of the word ישב.<sup>77</sup> This connection provides a sort of ‘frame’ for almost the entire Sinai speech of Lev 25-26. Neglecting the Sabbatical provides the justification for the judgement of exile in Lev 26.<sup>78</sup> This framework contributes additional evidence to what was earlier stated about the unity of Lev 25 and 26.

The significance of the seven occurrences of the three consonants שבת is that the land, according to 26:34-35, would enjoy its Sabbath years with or without the people residing in the land. This is the definitive proof of the Sabbatical being a שבת ליהוה.<sup>79</sup> Wright notes that it is the Sabbath that is the highest point of God’s creative work—creation therefore exists for God and not for man.<sup>80</sup> The Sabbatical is an *event* that speaks to the *condition* between Yahweh and the land—a restoration of the original state of being that overshadows mankind and is apart from man. As that restorative event occurs, there are obvious implications and benefits for the land’s inhabitants. Therein lies the necessity of the covenant. It is not only the source of the legislation, it is the means by which Israel can be allowed to participate in the restoration of the original state that Yahweh will accomplish, even if they are in exile.

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<sup>75</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2159.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 2323.

<sup>77</sup> Personal communication with R. Hayward.

<sup>78</sup> Ramban, *Leviticus*, p. 444; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2323.

<sup>79</sup> See Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2323.

<sup>80</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 126.

### Tabernacle and Eden

In the Sifra, the story is told of a king walking through the field of a sharecropper and finding the lowly farmer, hidden, trembling, and fearful of the king. “Why?” asks the king, since he has told the man, “Lo, I am just like you.”<sup>81</sup> This is Sifra’s explanation for the occurrence of **וַהֲתַדָּל בְּתִי** in Lev 26:12, a word that reflects back to its use in Genesis 3: 8.<sup>82</sup> The meaning of the story is that the Holy One will come to the Garden and reassure the righteous that there is no longer any need to tremble in his presence.<sup>83</sup> It is an obvious undoing of the results of the curse’s separation of man from God. This story from Sifra heavily influences both Rashi and Ramban. Rashi does not really develop the thought further, but emphasises the distinctiveness of the phrase “walking together.”<sup>84</sup> Ramban, on the other hand, takes the occasion to begin eschatological discussions of “worlds to come” and “Israel’s coming perfection.”<sup>85</sup> Clearly for both rabbis, the paradisiacal ‘walking together’ in 26:12 speaks of a return to the pristine relationship of Eden.

The rabbinic interpretation of walking together in Eden must be seen in the light of the stunning Tabernacle imagery in the statement of 26:11: “...and I will give my tabernacle in your midst” (**וְנִתְּתִי מִשְׁכְּנִי בְּתוֹכְכֶם**). The combination of these two images provides a powerful statement of covenantal restoration of the Edenic ideal. This *condition*, where Yahweh dwells and walks in the midst of his people (cf Gen 3:8) can only mean that the goal of the covenant has been achieved (cf. Exod 29: 45-46) and its promises fulfilled. The condition of the relationship before the “Fall” is

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<sup>81</sup> Sifra, *Be-har* p. 356.

<sup>82</sup> The LXX reads περιπατεω in Gen 3:8 and εμπεριπατεω in Lev 26:12. Note Wevers, *LXX*, p. 442.

<sup>83</sup> Sifra, *Be-har* p. 356.

<sup>84</sup> Rashi, *Leviticus*, p. 123a.

<sup>85</sup> Ramban, *Leviticus*, p. 465.

reflected.<sup>86</sup> Thus, “God’s blessings can bring a return to paradisiacal conditions.”<sup>87</sup> It has been noted that “walking with God” was a relational condition enjoyed by the patriarchs,<sup>88</sup> but, as Milgrom notes, the statement in 26:12 is rather that God will walk with man—that Eden is restored!<sup>89</sup>

The similarity between the Garden and the Tabernacle is not a new observation. According to the writer of *Jubilees*, the Garden was the perfect sanctuary, and Eve’s entrance has strong overtones of ritual purity, derived from Lev 12.<sup>90</sup> Josephus speaks even more grandly of the tabernacle, claiming its components were “...made in imitation and representation of the universe.”<sup>91</sup> This cosmic view of the Tabernacle (and later the Temple) and the Garden is also expounded by Levenson as he compares the completion of the two (universe and temple) as parallel moments when God activated the state of rest.<sup>92</sup> Levenson offers two observations about these quintessential moments.

**First**, he notes that the building of Solomon’s Temple in 1 Kings 8 contains a large amount of imagery around the number “seven” —it took seven years to build and it was dedicated in the seventh month, etc. Thus, “...the construction of the Temple is presented as a parallel to the construction of the world in seven days.”<sup>93</sup> While it is important to affirm Levenson’s observations, it was noted in chapter two

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<sup>86</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 315; Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 330.

<sup>87</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2302.

<sup>88</sup> Gen 5: 22, 24; 6: 9; 17:1; 24: 40; 48:15; See Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 330 n.8; S. Schultz, *Leviticus* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983) p. 131;

<sup>89</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2302.

<sup>90</sup> *Jubilees* 3: 8-14. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2302. The connections between Lev 12 and Eden are too extensive to be treated fully here, but its relevance to the return to Eden theme should not go unnoticed. In the case of *Jubilees*, Adam and Eve cannot enter the Garden until the demands of the covenant stipulations are met—the covenant is their ticket in.

<sup>91</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, 3.7.7.

<sup>92</sup> J. Levenson, ‘The Temple and the World,’ *Journal of Religion* 64 (1984) p. 288.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

that there is yet a further element, an eighth-day after the building/creating when the Temple cult is opened—and that day is a re-creative event.<sup>94</sup>

Levenson's **second** observation has a similar logic. He sees the culmination of creation and Temple connected to the Jubilee and Sabbath by the image of enthronement. Because of the *misharum* decrees and the idea of a decreed release upon a king's ascension, "...the Israelite Jubilee routinises the experience of enthronement of the human king in much the same way the Sabbath routinises the experience of divine enthronement at creation."<sup>95</sup> The idea of enthronement has been raised above.<sup>96</sup> The Jubilee shares the essential nature of the Sabbath, but the Jubilee extends beyond what Levenson has said precisely because it is an eighth-day event. Both observations lead to the same conclusion: the Sabbath cycle is intimately tied to creation but the eighth-day events speak of re-creation—an ending of the old and an inauguration of the new.

The connections between the Sabbath and the Tabernacle extend far beyond these observations. In a seminal article, Wenham has deciphered numerous ways in which the Garden was an archetypal sanctuary.<sup>97</sup> Subsequent work has further addressed the concept—and it is now recognised that the outline of the creation account in Gen 1-3 provides the structure for the account of the building of the Tabernacle in Exodus.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> See p.123.

<sup>95</sup> Levenson, *Temple*, pp. 293-4.

<sup>96</sup> See p. 46.

<sup>97</sup> G. Wenham, 'Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story,' in R. S. Hess and D. T. Tsumura (eds.) *"I Studied Inscriptions from Before the Flood:" Ancient Near Eastern, Literary, and Linguistic Approaches to Genesis 1-11* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1994) pp. 399-404.

<sup>98</sup> Sailhamer, *Pentateuch*, pp. 298-300.

## **Chapter Summary:**

When Wright's economic angle is applied to the Jubilee, it is clear that the dominant aspect is that of land tenure. This provides the cohesion by which to understand all the other aspects of the Jubilee. The sum of the Jubilee's legislation is aimed at the eventual re-establishment of a disenfranchised Israelite back with his family, on the land of his inheritance as a "free" man, servant only to Yahweh.

The source of the importance of land tenure is the land itself, because the land is freighted with immense theological meaning. The land embodies the promises and the relationship of the Israelites to Yahweh. Thus, the ultimate question in Lev 25-26 is how (and if) the Israelites will live on the land given to them by Yahweh.

Land tenure, then, functions as a picture of the larger return to Eden theme. The people of Israel will be brought into the land that God gives them—an Edenic metaphor. Importantly, it is a restoration that is accomplished by the redemptive act of the Exodus:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be your God (Lev 25:38).

The return to the land of Abraham is a metaphoric return from the exile of Egypt through the redemptive work of Israel's covenant God. If the Israelites remain obedient to him, they remain in the land. If not, they must go into exile and await the next return orchestrated by the God who does not forget his covenant (Lev 26:44-45). The cyclic restoration of land tenure at the Jubilee is a metaphoric return to the pristine state of land tenure and freedom at the time of entry into the Promised Land. The entry is itself a metaphoric return to Eden. Thus, the system of land tenure discussed in the Jubilee legislation is a microcosm of the larger biblical-theological themes of alienation, exile and return.

The theme addressed above, of food provision as the blessing of God, confirms this thought. When Israel lives upon the land in covenant harmony, bounty follows. The real issue, then, behind the economic angle is the theological, covenantal standing that Israel has with her God. The Jubilee functions as a picture of the complete restoration of the Edenic ideal of living in God's land in freedom and sonship and eating of his bountiful provision. This return can only come through Yahweh's covenant and redemption.

The import of all the data in this chapter is to demonstrate that land tenure provides cohesion for the various themes encountered, such as the Sabbath, the Tabernacle, Jubilee, the provision of food, land restoration, and covenantal fidelity. The evidence leads to the conclusion that the umbrella theme is the image of the return to Eden, and that it is a return that relies on covenant for its effectiveness. This covenantal power is clearly evidenced by the Exodus motivation, found both in the Decalogue (Deut 5:15) and in the Jubilee (vv. 38, 42, 55). The appeal to obey the redemption legislation of the Jubilee is based upon the great act of covenantal redemption modelled by Yahweh, the quintessential **אל**.

What has emerged, then, is the scenario: that the only way to completely return to the Edenic ideal is by Yahweh the **אל**, and that he sanctions this restoration only through the covenant. The logic behind beginning the Jubilee on the Day of Atonement is an expression of this restoration. The reason, as surmised earlier,<sup>99</sup> that the Year of Jubilee began on Yom Kippur is because that day was the "covenant reset," the day when the sins of the people of Israel were forgiven and they were restored to proper relationship with the sanctuary (with all of its multi-faceted Edenic imagery), and thereby to a proper relationship with Yahweh. Yom Kippur is therefore

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<sup>99</sup> See pp. 85-92.

the only proper day to begin the fiftieth-year event of Edenic return and covenantal redemption.

The entry into the Promised Land (25:2) is clearly a manifestation of the return to Eden imagery and the fulfilment of the covenantal promises—both ones made to the patriarchs as well as the Sinaitic promises. As a general rule, a move forward in the Bible towards the fulfilment of covenantal promises will include the manifestation of significant Edenic imagery.<sup>100</sup>

### **Summary of Wright's Ethical Triangle Approach:**

At this point, we have arrived at the end of Wright's ethical triangle as it pertains to the OT. Though not exhaustive, the exploration concerning the *content* of the Jubilee legislation has been illustrated. In the final chapter, the consideration will be about *how* the OT evidence functions as a paradigm for the NT and Christian theology and ethics.

In the course of working through the vertices of Wright's ethical triangle, there are three summary comments that must be made. The comments are the minor methodological adjustments that I suggest be made to Wright's method of doing OT ethics.

1) The priority in the use of the ethical triangle must be placed on the theological angle. It is this angle that provides the lens by which to interpret the other two angles. Wright himself suggests this approach:

It was to fit them for this purpose that the host of vertical and horizontal obligations formed part of the covenantal relationships...Whenever we seek to interpret any passage ethically, by locating it within the framework, seeing where it 'fits' and how it functions, we shall be seeing it in the light of the 'main beams' of Israel's constitution—namely the great themes of election,

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<sup>100</sup> Cf. C. G. Bartholomew, 'Covenant and Creation: Covenant Overload or Covenantal Deconstruction,' *Calvin Theological Journal* 30 (1995) pp. 11-33; G. K. Beale, 'Eden, the Temple, and the Church's Mission in the New Creation,' *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 48.1 (2005) pp. 5-31.



redemption, law and land.<sup>101</sup>

However, in the practice of analysing the Jubilee, Wright allows the social angle to assert itself in interpretation. The theological themes of Israel's relationship with God should guide the investigation of the Jubilee and its components.

This is the approach I have followed in the previous chapters. In chapter two, the theological import of Yom Kippur, the יוֹבֵל trumpet and the eighth-day were explored. In chapter three, the investigation, conducted from the vantage point of the theological angle, produced different perspectives on a variety of issues, such as the *Numeruswechsel*, the resident alien, the Israelite "brother" and even the structure of the Jubilee legislation itself.

In chapter four, the economic angle, with its dominant issue of land tenure, was examined. By viewing that topic theologically, it became apparent that land tenure is itself paradigmatic of the larger issues of covenant fidelity, exile, and a return to Eden. It is not that the interpretation of the limited data concerning land tenure has been drastically altered (it has not), but rather the theological priority has made the connection of land tenure with the larger biblical-theological context more readily discernible. And that connection brings us to the second point.

2) Included within the analysis of the ethical triangle must be the constant reflection upon how the data of ancient Israel (as the OT presents it) fits with the larger biblical-theological themes of the OT. Investigation should, then, progress on two levels. The first should seek to analyse the textual data within the context of ancient Israel (as best as can be determined using both literary and historical-critical methodologies). The second level would seek to locate the passage (in our case, the

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<sup>101</sup> Wright, *Eye*, p. 63

Jubilee) within the larger meta-narrative of the OT, with ever a watchful eye for theological themes.

Additionally, attention should be paid to how a topic is developed in the OT. As a theme or motif advances through the OT, its expression constantly changes and expands by newly developed contexts as well as the progress of the storyline—especially at times when the development of covenant history surges forward. This task is an attempt to understand how the changing contexts help to modify and clarify the ethical imperative while allowing the progress of the storyline to inform us as to how to appropriate OT ethics for our time.

The development of the Jubilee theme as it progresses through the OT and the connection of the Jubilee to larger biblical-theological themes are important considerations simply because it is not clear that the Jubilee was observed in Israel during the biblical period. The theological concerns then become even more important than they might be for a law practiced with greater frequency, such as, for example, the Sabbath.

The combining of the textual investigation with the meta-narrative reflection is required preparation for the way I suggest the transition is made into Christian ethics—this combination is my alternative to finding derived principles that so plague the application of OT ethics for the Christian. That combination is my third point.

3) In the introduction to this paper, it was pointed out that Wright sees the society of Israel as a paradigm for how the OT is to be used for ethics. In taking the social world of Israel as a paradigm (not to be literally applied) for the people of God today, there is still the problem of authority, as was discussed in the first chapter.

Wright suggests that a biblical ethic must consist of the juxtaposition of “...Israel’s social shape and characteristics, her institutions, laws and ideals...”

alongside the “new age of fulfilment.”<sup>102</sup> Of the interpreter responsible for this task, Wright says:

He therefore sets his Old Testament social paradigm alongside the paradigm of the social life of the early church as well as the explicit social teaching of Jesus and the apostles. Only then is he beginning to formulate a wholly biblical ethic.<sup>103</sup>

The question, then, is how to connect these different “sections” of biblical, ethical material. Wright’s solution is to extrapolate a derived principle from the evidence.<sup>104</sup> He has moved the discussion of ethics along from a descriptive level to a “middle level” of ethical authority or value, often referred to as a ‘middle axiom’, or derived principle, to use Janzen’s term.<sup>105</sup> This “middle level” is the result and application of the OT section of the ethical triangle method. I fear that, in essence, the authority issue has simply shifted from discussion over the text to a debate over the validity of the principles one derives from the ethical triangle studies. The question is, are these derived principles of sufficient truth to be said to God’s people today, “thus saith the Lord?”

However, if we adapt his method slightly (by switching from a search for a correspondence with Israel’s paradigmatic social setting to a search for how the paradigmatic social setting relates to the dominant themes of the OT), then the paradigm’s application is no longer a principle but rather a contribution to major biblical-theological themes. By becoming intimately connected to an overarching biblical theme, the results move much closer to carrying the authority of Scripture.

The final chapter concerns itself with these matters.

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<sup>102</sup> Wright, *Eye*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> This method is seen in his paradigmatic interpretation of the economic angle, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>105</sup> Janzen, *Ethics*, p. 75.

**Chapter Five:**  
**New Testament Fulfilment**

This final chapter is concerned with the Christian appropriation of the Jubilee. In the previous chapters, the study of the OT data was conducted by using Wright's ethical triangle as a model. The difficult task then is to relate that data to the NT. It becomes even more complicated when the questions involve the matters of authority and the normative force of the Bible.

Wright has written extensively on the method of bridging the covenants. He has presented a three-part method, each part complementing the other, by which he brings the OT data to bear on the modern world. I will summarise each part of the method and then offer an individual assessment of each part. The three parts are: the paradigmatic use of the OT; the typological use; and the eschatological use of the OT.

### **Wright's Paradigmatic Interpretation of the Jubilee**

A great deal of study to understand the Jubilee legislation in its OT context is necessary in order to build the paradigm of the Jubilee law. Wright applies that paradigm to the modern context in a *paradigmatic* way, which he describes:

God's relation to Israel in the land was a deliberate reflection of his relation to mankind on the earth, or rather, a redemptive response to the fracturing of his creative purpose in the latter sphere.<sup>1</sup>

Wright's *paradigmatic* method means that is the social and legal systems of Israel function as a paradigm for the people of God today and also for "...the wider world of modern-day secular society."<sup>2</sup>

This paradigmatic use of Israel is quite consistent with Wright's explanation of paradigms.<sup>3</sup> Wright argues that the paradigm of Israel's society has ethical

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<sup>1</sup> Wright, *Eye*, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 7.

implications for all of mankind.<sup>4</sup> This conclusion is important for Wright, as it has broad implications for biblical ethics.

Wright's view is that the land of Israel and the earth share a common nature, because both are possessions of God. Just as God claimed the land of Israel in Lev 25:23, so he claimed all the earth in Psalm 24:1: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it..."<sup>5</sup> The two claims are parallel, Wright argues, and so the creation principle for the whole earth may be informed and defined by the more particular designs God had for the land of Israel.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, the value of the Jubilee laws, because of their task of protecting land tenure and preventing abuse by a wealthy elite, is an echo (but also an imperative) of the creation principle that God gave the whole earth to all humanity and mankind has stewardship of it. Thus, "the moral consistency of God" allows the ethical imperative to transfer from Israel to all humanity:<sup>7</sup>

So there is, within the Old Testament itself, an awareness that the law given in a unique way to Israel as a unique people had wider relevance for the rest of mankind, just as their call to be a 'holy nation' was so that they could be a 'priesthood', a 'light to the nations'. This frees us to explore the law with that wider purpose in mind and justifies what we described earlier as a '*paradigmatic*' approach. That is, we assume that if God gave Israel certain specific institutions and laws, they were based on principles which have universal validity. That does not mean that Christians will try to impose by law in a secular state provisions lifted directly from the law of Moses. It does mean that they will work to bring their society nearer to conformity with the principles underlying the concrete laws of Old Testament society, because they perceive the same God to be both Redeemer and law-giver of Israel, and also Creator and Ruler of contemporary mankind.<sup>8</sup>

Wright applies that method to each of the vertices of the ethical triangle.

**Economically**, God's desires for Israel's land tenure is extrapolated out to God's

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<sup>4</sup> Wright, *Eye*, p. 162; idem, *OT Ethics*, p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 207.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Wright, *Eye*, p. 162.

desire for humanity to have equitable distribution of the earth's resources and a guard against mankind's tendency to oppress each other economically.<sup>9</sup>

In the **social** angle, Wright believes the Jubilee clearly portrayed the importance of the clan and the father's house. The maintenance of the family unit, which was the specific intent of the Jubilee laws, was accomplished by the restriction and cure of the burden of debt—debt splits families and societies. The application of the social angle of the Jubilee to our world, Wright argues, compels us to address matters of debt and debt related social ills.<sup>10</sup>

Wright's explanation of the **theological** angle provides insight into how he views the relation of the Jubilee to the religious faith of Israel. The theological angle has several core elements: God's sovereignty and providence, God's historical acts of redemption, the experience of forgiveness in the Exodus event and the eschatological hope of a final restoration.

To apply the jubilee model, then, requires that people obey the sovereignty of God, trust the providence of God, know the story of the redeeming action of God, experience personally the atonement provided by God, practice God's justice and put their hope in God's promise. The wholeness of the jubilee model embraces the church's evangelistic mission, its personal and social ethics and its hope.<sup>11</sup>

### **Assessment of Wright's Paradigmatic Interpretation of the Jubilee**

Wright is correct in his concern that the OT be viewed as relevant for today. His paradigmatic method further evinces the concern for relevancy to the world in general:

It also prevents us from taking this attitude, 'This was all given in the context of a redeemed community and is therefore irrelevant to secular, unregenerate society.'<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 207.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. p. 208.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. p. 209.

<sup>12</sup> Wright, *Eye*, p. 89.

The question I have is whether his paradigmatic method is in harmony with what has been discovered in this study of the Jubilee legislation. I do not believe that, in this case, it is. There are three reasons behind my suggestion.

1) The Jubilee was intended only for the Israelites. In chapter two, Milgrom pointed out that the Jubilee was only normative for ethnic Israel. The Sabbatical was to be obeyed by all in the land, including slaves and resident aliens, but the Jubilee was only “for you” (25:10), meaning Israelites.<sup>13</sup>

In chapter three it was argued that the relationship that the Jubilee was most intent on preserving was that of an Israelite to his God, Yahweh. Those outside that relationship (i.e. non-Israelites) could be sold as slaves in perpetuity, but not the Israelites—they were slaves only to Yahweh. The key relationship of **אֱלֹהִים** in the Jubilee legislation meant that the Jubilee was exclusively for the Israelites as members of God’s people. The point is that the Jubilee was exclusive, and *not* intended for other peoples.

2) The Jubilee laws applied only to the Promised Land. There is something different about that specific land—it is given to Israel. The people of Egypt were not to fallow their land every seven years in obedience to Israel’s law, nor were the Mesopotamian property laws changed to fit Lev 25. Only the land of promise was inherited land.

That is not to say that no other lands surrounding Israel had practices that resembled Israel’s fallow laws or redemption procedures. That is not the point. The point is that Yahweh’s laws applied only to the land he gave to Israel. Neither the slavery and redemption laws nor the land tenure laws were relevant to the surrounding secular societies of Israel’s day.

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<sup>13</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2171.



3) The primary difficulty that is posed to Wright's paradigmatic interpretation comes from the exclusivity of Israel's covenant. The covenant is a dominant factor in the interpretation of the Jubilee, from the announcement of **יָרֵד** on Yom Kippur to the thrice-mentioned motivation of the Exodus out of Egypt (vv. 38, 42, 55). The outworking of covenant redemption in the life of Israel is the principle reason that the laws of Israel were exclusively applied to Israel.

Even more, the covenant *prohibits* the Jubilee laws from being applied to other peoples. God does indeed have a plan for those who remain outside the covenant and he provided a glimpse of that plan at Jericho. The land that was given to Israel was the same land taken from the nations that were under **יָרֵד**.

The nations could certainly come to Israel, and there are discussions in Lev 25 of how Israel should treat a resident alien in their midst, but that is precisely the point: outsiders had to come to Israel, be obedient to the laws of Israel, and conduct themselves in a certain way within the society of Israel. It is Israel's covenant which defines Israel and definition is an exclusive act. These three things, ultimately, make Wright's paradigmatic method untenable.

### **Wright's Typological Interpretation of the Jubilee**

Using this method, Wright asks how the Jubilee functioned as a *type* of the new age that Jesus brought. In essence, the question is *how* the Jubilee relates to Jesus' fulfilment of the OT promises.<sup>14</sup>

Jesus came proclaiming a message of the imminent arrival of the kingdom of God. With that kingdom would come a reversal of the fortunes of Israel and the

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<sup>14</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, pp. 205-6.

restoration, which only the Messiah could bring. Wright argues that Jesus proclaimed this message using jubiliary imagery.<sup>15</sup>

To address the question of typology, Wright turns to the writings of Luke and he approaches two sections that he claims have Jubilee allusions and imagery: the “Nazareth Manifesto” in Luke 4, and the life of the early church in Acts 4.<sup>16</sup>

Wright understands Jesus’ sermon in Luke 4:16-30 to be the closest Jesus ever comes to making a purpose statement of his mission.<sup>17</sup> Jesus’ sermon includes a quotation of Isa 61, where the use of the distinctive Jubilee word **יָרֵד** brings a Jubilee allusion to the sermon. Most commentators, Wright argues, see at least some degree of jubiliary concepts in Luke 4.<sup>18</sup>

Wright is concerned that the Jubilee is not viewed by NT Christians as only having a metaphorical or spiritual meaning. Wright certainly acknowledges the fulfilment of the Jubilee by Jesus, but he insists that “fulfilment” does not require losing the concept of a real economic release within the kingdom.<sup>19</sup> As evidence, he references Ringe’s argument that the word for release in 4:18 (**αφεσις**) carries ideas of both spiritual forgiveness of sin and the literal, financial remission of debts.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the original jubilee background of economic release has been preserved in Jesus’ challenge concerning ethical response to the kingdom of God. If we are to pray the Lord’s prayer, “release for us our debts,” we must be willing to release others from theirs. It is not a matter of deciding between a spiritual and a material meaning, for both can be included as appropriate.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 301.

<sup>16</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, pp. 205-6.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 301. However, see the discussion on O’Brien below.

<sup>19</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 302.

<sup>20</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 206.

<sup>21</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 302.

At the end of his discussion, Wright make the important observation that the Jubilee “...functions both as a future hope and also as an ethical demand in the present.”<sup>22</sup>

This “already... not yet” perspective was seen in the OT study.

In the early chapters of Acts, Wright detects a discussion of the eschatological restoration that is expressed by the use of the “unusual” word ἀποκτασταις (‘complete restoration’) in 1:6 and 3:21. Wright sees the idea behind this word as the core of Jubilee hope, which is now applied to the whole world. That hope prompted the early church to respond with “economic mutual help.”<sup>23</sup> He does not explain why exactly they felt compelled to respond to that hope economically.

### **Assessment of Wright’s Typological Interpretation of the Jubilee**

I think that the study of the Jubilee from a theological perspective impacts the typological approach. I do agree that typology is a very effective way to interpret the Jubilee but it seems to me that the difficulty of the approaches of Wright, Ringe and Sloane (and O’Brien, as we shall see in a moment), is that they are defining typology by the details, instead of in the biblical story. By focusing on the distinctive socio-economic prescriptions, they bring the “broad evidence”<sup>24</sup> of the NT jubiliary details and images to the fore but I think something else should be in the forefront.

Because the Jubilee is primarily theological, the place to find the OT types is not in the details of the legislation but, rather, in the overarching biblical theological themes that we have seen to dominate the legislation. Several writers on the topic of typology suggest that the correspondences of typology are to be found on the

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<sup>22</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 206.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 205.

kerygmatic level (von Rad<sup>25</sup>), or, as Eichrodt says, in the story of the salvation of God,<sup>26</sup> or more recently, Goldsworthy's "inner theological structure" of the Bible.<sup>27</sup>

Simply put, then, I think the types of the Jubilee that we may appropriate are the theological themes of redemption and restoration provided by Yahweh: the types are not the socio-economic issues of slave and land redemption, or land tenure. These two Jubilee types are themselves antitypes of the two **יובל** events of Sinai (the redemption at the Exodus) and Jericho (the restoration of the entry into the land). The role of the socio-economic details, then, is to describe *how* Israel is to imitate her God as a response to these two thematic types.

For us to find the NT antitypes of these Jubilee themes, we must find the NT data that describes God's covenantal dealings with his people wherein he bestowed the same fulfilment of the redemption and restoration that we saw in the Jubilee. That antitype is the person of Jesus—the event of his ministry and atonement and the institution of his body, the church.

Jesus fulfils the ethical regulations of the Jubilee in his person as the obedient Son of God (we will look at fulfilment in Jesus' Luke 4 sermon below), but he also fulfils the Jubilee on the biblical-theological level in his death and resurrection. We will examine that point in a section below that suggests the resurrection is the antitype of the eighth-day.

The early church as described in Acts did indeed respond to this Jubilee fulfilment in the same way Israel was to respond to the Jubilee—with socio-economic brotherhood (we will also examine the response of the early church). This brotherhood was pointed out in chapter three as a significant element of the Jubilee

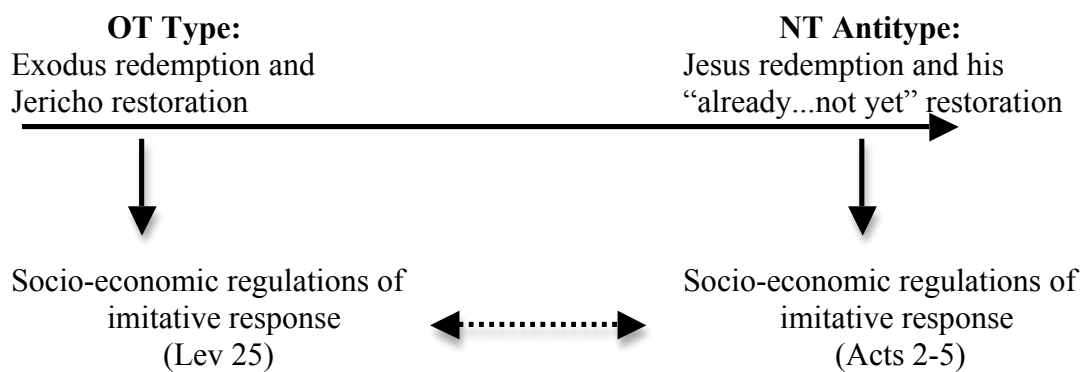
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<sup>25</sup> von Rad, *Typological*, p. 37.

<sup>26</sup> Eichrodt, *Typological*, p. 226.

<sup>27</sup> Goldsworthy, *Relationship*, p. 87.

(and in chapter one as Carmichael's conclusion of national identity<sup>28</sup>). This conclusion suggests that by comparing the details of the responses to the type/antitype (and allowing them to inform each other), we can find the ethical imperatives by which we should live today. The construct I am suggesting of the Jubilee's typological correspondence and imitative response with the NT is portrayed in the following graph:



In the end, what I am suggesting about the NT appropriation of the Jubilee is not drastically different than Wright's conclusions. The difference, however, is that I see the imperative force being derived from the meta-narrative and its biblical theological themes (primarily as they relate to Jesus) rather than the specific details of the legislation. This is the sort of 'call and response' by which both the church and the ancient Israelites were able to determine their responsibilities to Yahweh. Fletcher describes this “kerygmatic social ethic:”

...the proclamation of what God has done and is bringing to completion involves at the same time the proclamation of what God demands and of the expected response on man's part. A kerygmatic ethic then looks at 'the shape of God's action...the kind of reality created or made possible by what God does in creation, reconciliation and redemption' and to the 'shape of human response which is congruent with the divine action.'<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> See p. 60.

<sup>29</sup> V. H. Fletcher, 'The Shape of Old Testament Ethics,' *Scottish Journal of Theology* 24 (1971) p. 48.

Fletcher adds that the focus of God's deeds and commands is not abstract but comes from "detailed attention to the whole sweep of God's dealing with man."<sup>30</sup>

Before looking at some of the passages that were mentioned, we need to address Wright's last interpretive method, the eschatological approach.

### **Wright's Eschatological Interpretation of the Jubilee**

With this method, Wright recognises that the images of the OT, such as land, land tenure, and even Israel itself, will ultimately find their fulfilment in the completely restored state:

God's redemptive purpose, initiated through Israel and their land, will ultimately embrace all nations and the whole earth, in a transformed and perfect new creation.<sup>31</sup>

The land points to a new heaven and new earth—a paradise restored in which righteousness reign and the thorns and thistles give way to the milk and honey of God's fulfilment.<sup>32</sup>

This method, Wright says, does not really add content to biblical ethics, in the sense of contributing data to the interpretation of OT images. What the eschatological perspective does do, however, is provide urgency to the telling of the biblical story, and it provides incentives to obey its injunctions.<sup>33</sup> Wright mentions the importance of the thematic development within the OT as 'release and restoration' adapt into metaphorical applications that the prophets use in order to speak of fulfilment.<sup>34</sup>

In this method, it is possible to see the continued influence of Wright's paradigmatic interpretation as he expresses that the socio-economic injunctions of the Jubilee should maintain their relevance and imperative force on society today:

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> Wright, *Eye*, p. 90.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 186.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

...the jubilee could be used to portray God's final intervention for messianic redemption and restoration; but it could also support an ethical challenge for justice to the oppressed in contemporary history.<sup>35</sup>

### **Assessment of Wright's Eschatological Interpretation of the Jubilee**

Wright presents his case well, and apart from my thoughts on his paradigmatic use of the Jubilee, I have nothing really to question in his argument. For the purposes of this paper, however, there are a couple of thoughts I would like to add.

**First**, the eschatological method is essentially typology extended out to the final state. Israel is a type of the redeemed people at the new creation and the land is a type of the new creation itself. So, while I agree with Wright that this does not add content *per se*, the eschatology does provide the direction and guidance we need to understand the OT data, especially when approaching the OT typologically. Essentially, chapter four, on the economic angle and land tenure, was an exercise in this eschatological method—it provided the direction and cohesion for my discussion of the Jubilee and its ethical import.

**Second**, we need to keep in the front of our minds that, because of the resurrection, we are experiencing a measure of the fulfilment of the eschatological age already. The eschaton has begun, but we do not see the full restoration. As Karlberg notes concerning typological fulfilment:

“...the earthly promises associated with the Mosaic economy, are symbolic and typical (and thus fulfilled by Christ in two phases: first, in the semi-eschatological age of the Spirit, and second, in the new heavens and the new earth yet to come).<sup>36</sup>

It is to be expected, then, that just as Christ's death and resurrection was a typological fulfilment of the Jubilee, so the final consummation will also carry typological overtones of Jubilee fulfilment. With the perspective of the “already...not

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> W. E. Glenny, ‘Typology: A Summary of the Present Evangelical Discussion,’ *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40 (1997) p. 631.

yet,” we will examine the story of Ananias and Sapphira, which I suggest is a story closely related to the Jubilee and Jesus’ fulfilment of the new age but which also prompts us to look forward to the last, final fulfilment at the end of the age.

### **Jesus and Fulfilment in Luke 4:16-30:**

As Wright has shown, Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth provides the initial landing place for discussions of the Jubilee in the NT. Almost all commentators acknowledge the presence of Jubilee imagery in Luke 4, regardless of their conclusions as to its interpretive worth.<sup>37</sup>

Some interpreters, though, think that Jesus’ “Nazareth Manifesto” should not be interpreted apart from the Jubilee. For them, Jesus’ sermon is indicative of the physical restoration that he brings.<sup>38</sup> For other commentators, the Jubilee imagery is obvious, but it is secondary to their chief concern, which is the impact of Luke 4 on the interpretation of Christological titles.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Wright, *Mission*, p. 301. Again, the connection between Lev 25, Isa 61 and Luke 4 comes from the shared ideas and vocabulary of לשנה טובה, an acceptable year, and ἀφεσις.

<sup>38</sup> See R. O’Toole, ‘Does Luke Also Portray Jesus As the Christ in Luke 4, 16-30?’ *Biblica* 76.4 (1995) p. 513 and D. W. Pao and E. J. Schnabel, ‘Luke 4: 18-19,’ in G. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds. *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) p. 290. I am thinking here in particular of R. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 1997) p. 47. In contrast, see R. B. Sloane, *The Favorable Year of the Lord* (Austin, TX: Schola Press, 1977).

<sup>39</sup> Debate over the messianic, servant, and prophetic influences in the passage dominates the secondary literature. See J. J. Collins, ‘A Herald of Good Tidings: Isaiah 61:1-3 and Its Actualisation in the Dead Sea Scrolls,’ in C. A. Evans and S. Talmon (eds.) *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) p. 239; J. Goldingay, *Isaiah*, NIBC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001) p. 346; D. E. Aune, ‘A Note on Jesus’ Messianic Consciousness and 11QMelchizedek,’ *Evangelical Quarterly* 45 (1973) p. 165; R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1975) p. 240; J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1981) p. 529; I. H. Marshall, *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970) pp. 124-128.



One particular interpreter is adamant that the Jubilee should *not* play a role in the interpretation of Jesus' sermon.<sup>40</sup> O'Brien makes three points to buttress his argument against the influence of jubiliary imagery in Jesus' sermon:

1) Though O'Brien does acknowledge that Isa 61 is a midrash of Lev 25, he argues that the evidence is lacking to demonstrate that Luke was aware of any dependence of Isa 61 upon Lev 25, nor, if Luke did know of dependence, that he thought it important.<sup>41</sup> O'Brien points out that none of the Jubilee's features (such as the 7x7 cyclic nature, Sabbath, land restoration, the shofar, '50') are to be found in Jesus' sermon.<sup>42</sup>

2) O'Brien acknowledges that the vocabulary connecting Lev 25, Isa 61 (from the LXX) and Luke 4 is clearly ἀφεσις. He argues, though, that the OT occurrences are concerned with a physical release whereas the gospel of Luke is concerned with the forgiveness of sins.<sup>43</sup>

3) His third argument is ostensibly persuasive. He asserts that the "common assumption that Jubilee Year ideology plays an important role in the Gospel of Luke" is nowhere affirmed in early Christian thinking.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> D. O'Brien, 'A Comparison between Early Jewish and Early Christian Interpretations of the Jubilee Year,' in M. F. Wiles and E. J. Yarnold, eds. *13<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Patristic Studies Studia Patristica vol. xxxiv* (Leuven: Peeters, 2001) pp. 436-442.

<sup>41</sup> O'Brien, *Comparison*, p. 439. See also J. A. Sanders, 'From Isaiah 61 to Luke 4,' in J. Neusner (ed.) *Christianity, Judaism and Other Greco-Roman Cults: Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975) p. 76; J. Neusner and W. S. Green, (eds.) *Dictionary of Judaism in the Biblical Period* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2002) p. 429, explains that a midrash of Lev 25 must necessarily be one 'step' removed from the original text in order to comment upon it.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. See also W. M. Swartley, *Israel's Scripture Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994) p. 78.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 440. O'Brien notes that 11Q13 connects Jubilee, ἀφεσις and 'sins' but he considers it an anomaly. He does not address *Jubilees* 50.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

O'Brien's concerns accentuate the need for clear, realistic expectations about exegesis and especially typological exegesis. I have argued that whenever a text is referenced within the biblical storyline, it is adapted to its new context until it reaches the point in the NT where it is declared 'fulfilled'. In Jesus' sermon, these OT texts have reached that point. The sermon does not describe how the Jubilee is nuanced by Jesus' influence. Rather, the sermon demonstrates that Jubilee imagery is one part of all the OT imagery finding its fulfilment in Christ. There is far more than semantics to the statement that the Jubilee is not fulfilled by Jesus but instead, that Jesus fulfils the Jubilee.<sup>45</sup>

Therefore, a search like O'Brien's for the physical Jubilee institution (as a whole or in parts), in the NT (or the early Fathers) is looking for the wrong evidence. As the typological graph above illustrates, the Jubilee lives on past its fulfilled state in the correspondences between the ethical response of God's people, in the OT and the NT, to the provision of God's redemption and promised restoration. The result is that there may be a "broad evidence"<sup>46</sup> of jubiliary material in the NT (or the Fathers) as Wright suggests, but it will not be as obvious as we might expect.

Ringe has noted that Jubilee allusions are more probable when they occur clustered in a single passage. She identifies Luke 4: 16-30 as such a passage.<sup>47</sup> There is strong scholarly agreement that this sermon was "programmatic" for Jesus' ministry,<sup>48</sup> but, as Siker points out, there is little agreement as to how it was so.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> This statement illuminates perspectives like R. Eckardt, *Reclaiming the Jesus of History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) p. 98 who describes Jesus as a "would-be liberator" and "failure" because Eckardt fails to account for progressive adaptation and only expects a physical kingdom deliverance.

<sup>46</sup> See n. 24.

<sup>47</sup> S. Ringe, *Jesus, Liberation, and the Biblical Jubilee* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), p. 35f.

<sup>48</sup> See J. Kolasny, 'An Example of Rhetorical Criticism: Luke 4: 16-30,' in E. Richard ed. *New Views on Luke and Acts* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press,

It may be helpful to return to the vantage point of Lev 25 and look ahead, through Isa 61, and ask how Jesus' sermon was 'resignified' from that history of interpretation perspective. There appears to be five ways that the Jubilee adapts to changing contexts on its way from Lev 25, through Isa 61, to Luke 4.<sup>50</sup>

**First**, in Isa 61 and in coming from Isa 61 to Luke 4, we see that a text can become *eschatologised*.<sup>51</sup> In particular, the Nazareth sermon concerned the end-time and the new age.<sup>52</sup> Brawley notes that the sermon, pronounced "against an established eschatological background" announces a year that reflects the Jubilee<sup>53</sup> or, possibly even the royal Mesopotamian decrees.<sup>54</sup> Jesus summarised his sermon with talk of *ἐνιαυτον κυρίου δεκτον* from Isa 61: 2 and that is reflective of *ἐνιαυτος ἀφεσεως σημασια* from Lev 25:10 LXX.<sup>55</sup> Several commentators have argued that the

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1990) p. 69; B. J. Koet, 'Isaiah in Luke-Acts,' in S. Moyise and M. J. J. Menken eds. *Isaiah in the New Testament* (London: T & T Clark, 2005) p. 83; L. C. Crockett, 'Luke 4: 25-27 and Jewish-Gentile Relations in Luke-Acts,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88.2 (1969) p. 177; D. Hill, 'The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth (Luke IV 16-30),' *Novum Testamentum* 13.3 (1971) p. 161; B. C. Frein, 'Narrative Predictions, Old Testament Prophecies and Luke's Sense of Fulfilment,' *New Testament Studies* 40 (1994) p. 27; J. S. Siker, 'First to the Gentiles': A Literary Analysis of Luke 4:16-30, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111.1 (1992) p. 75; Ringe, *Jesus*, p. 89; R. C. Tannehill, 'Israel in Luke-Acts: A Tragic Story,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 104.1 (1985) p. 70; idem, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts, vol. 1* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986) p. 61; D. L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1994) p. 394; O'Toole, *Luke*, p. 499 n.7 has an additional, full bibliography on this point.

<sup>49</sup> Siker, *Literary*, p. 75.

<sup>50</sup> The Qumran document 11Q13 is relevant to this topic and consistently included in scholarly discussions. While its influence would be considered in the *textual context*, because of the concern with canon, I have not placed 11Q13 on the same source level as scripture.

<sup>51</sup> Sloan, *Favorable*, p. 159 argues that eschatology is the common element between the biblical and extra-biblical sources

<sup>52</sup> Kolasney, *Rhetorical*, p. 69; Collins, *Herald*, p. 239; Marshall, *Historian*, p. 120.

<sup>53</sup> R. L. Brawley, *Luke-Acts and the Jews: Conflict, Apology, and Conciliation* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987) p. 13.

<sup>54</sup> Ringe, *Jesus*, p. 30; J. Gray, *The Biblical Doctrine of the Reign of God* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1979) p. 324.

<sup>55</sup> C. F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (London: SCM Press, 1990)p. 271; Siker, *Literary*, p. 83; Hill, *Rejection*, p. 168; Sloan, *Favorable*, p. 32.

eschatologised favourable year is essentially the definition of the kingdom of God.<sup>56</sup>

If Isa 61 and Lev 25 are connected, then Wright correct detects jubiliary imagery carrying eschatological meaning *into* Isa 61 and then *into* Luke 4.<sup>57</sup> Along with the eschatology come the ethical implications of the Jubilee. In preparation for each approaching Jubilee, ethical responses are commanded of the people. Then, at the Jubilee, Yahweh delivers something to his people, and in Luke 4, it is ἀφεσις, through Jesus.<sup>58</sup>

**Second**, Luke's Nazareth sermon presents the favourable year as fully *actualised* by Jesus.<sup>59</sup> There is no question with the use of σημερον πεπληροωται (4:21) that the time of fulfilment was at the moment of Jesus' statement—like the Jubilee blast, the time of salvation comes with the announcement.<sup>60</sup> The actualisation in the sermon is definitive: “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (v. 21).<sup>61</sup> That definiteness is a change from the ambiguity of Isa 61, which lacks a scholarly consensus whether the prophecy is future or actualised.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Collins, *Herald*, p. 239; B. Witherington III, *The Acts of the Apostles: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998) p. 184; J. A. Sanders, ‘Sins, Debts and Jubilee Release,’ in R. P. Carroll, ed. *Text as Pretext: Essays in Honour of Robert Davidson*, JSOTS 138 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992) p. 280; O’Toole, *Luke*, p. 513; A. Finkel, Jesus’ Sermon at Nazareth (Luk. 4, 16-30),’ in O. Betz, M. Hengel and P. Schmidt, eds. *Abraham Unser Vater: Juden und Christen im Gespräch über die Bibel: Festschrift für Otto Michel* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963) p. 111; Tannehill, *Narrative*, p. 63.

<sup>57</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 210.

<sup>58</sup> Ringe, *Jesus*, p. 66; O’Toole, *Luke*, p. 513 points out that δεκτος applies both to the year and to Jesus simultaneously.

<sup>59</sup> Collins, *Herald*, p. 240; Barker, *Jubilee*, p. 28; Hill, *Rejection*, p. 177; E. E. Ellis, *The Gospel of Luke* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1983) p. 97; Evans, *Luke*, p. 270; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983) p. 107; J. Kodell, ‘Luke’s Gospel in a Nutshell (Luke 4:16-30),’ *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 13 (1983) p. 17. Swartley, *Traditions*, p. 77.

<sup>60</sup> J. Nolland, *Luke 9:21-18:34* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1989) p. 196.

<sup>61</sup> Barker, *Jubilee*, p. 28; O’Toole, *Luke*, p. 503.

<sup>62</sup> For example, Goldingay, *Isaiah*, p. 346 and Whybray, *Isaiah*, p. 241 see the text as prophetic. Nolland, *Luke*, p. 196 and Watts, J. D. Watts, *Isaiah 40-66* (Waco,

By actualising a favourable year, attention is drawn to the use of time elements in the text. “Today” is a frequent tool<sup>63</sup> in Luke’s gospel, and so are the uses of time words such as καιρος (1: 20), χρονος (1: 57), and ημεραι (2: 21, 22), all within the opening chapters.<sup>64</sup> Conzelmann made his famous assertion of three epochs in Luke-Acts: the time of Israel, the time of Jesus and the time of the church, based on such evidence.<sup>65</sup> Though quite helpful, actualisation cannot be seen as anything but fulfilment in the person of Jesus, which does not fit neatly into Conzelmann’s scheme. Thus, those who address his theory are routinely forced to make adaptations.<sup>66</sup> Instead, the statement of Jesus should be seen as the functional equivalent of the יוֹבֵל horn—the utterance activates the time,<sup>67</sup> fulfilling the past and inaugurating the future.

**Third**, the reaction of the people to the sermon demonstrates that Jesus *individualises* the message. Any possible fulfilment of the Jubilee in Luke will be in the person of Jesus.<sup>68</sup> In a concrete way, Jesus is the Jubilee. The process of individualisation began earlier and is evidenced in Isa 61, which Evans describes:

...the only passage in Isaiah where the prophet speaks in person of the

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TX: Word Books, 1987) p. 303 think it to be actualised. This finality differs from 11Q13, where the end was imminent but not present, cf. WAC, *Scrolls*, p. 592.

<sup>63</sup> Evans, *Luke*, p. 272 lists occurrences: 2:11; 3: 33; 4: 21; 5: 26; 19: 9; 23: 43; Acts 13: 33.

<sup>64</sup> D. Peterson, ‘The Motif of Fulfilment and the Purpose of Luke-Acts,’ in B. W. Winter and A. D. Clarke, eds. *The Book of Acts in Its Ancient Literary Setting* (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 1993) p. 88.

<sup>65</sup> The three periods are demarcated in Luke 16:16, 4:21, and 22:35-37. See H. Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961) p. 16; Marshall, *Historian*, p. 120 and P. S. Minear, ‘A Note on Luke 22: 36,’ *Novum Testamentum* 7 (1964) pp. 128-134. Cf. H. Anderson, ‘Broadening Horizons: The Rejection at Nazareth Pericope of Luke 4: 16-30 in Light of Recent Critical Trends,’ *Interpretation* 18 (1964) p. 272.

<sup>66</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p.186; Sloan, *Favorable*, p. 157.

<sup>67</sup> See Morris, *Luke*, p. 107; Hill, *Rejection*, p. 177.

<sup>68</sup> de Jonge, M. and van der Woude, A. S. ‘11Q Melchizedek and the New Testament,’ *New Testament Studies* 12 (1965) p. 310; Goldingay, *Isaiah*, p. 347; Tannehill, *Israel*, p. 70.

character and purpose of his mission, and of his appointment to it by an endowment with the spirit of God.<sup>69</sup>

By his typological fulfilment of the role of Son of God (cf. Exod 4: 22), Jesus fulfils the corporate laws of the Jubilee in his individual person. He provides liberty and proclaims **לְחֵרֶת**. Brooke notes:

What is the significance of this similar usage of the combination of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61 in both 11Q13 and Luke 4? The texts are mutually illuminating in several respects, with regard to the eschatological fulfilment of the jubilee chronology in the activity of an anointed one.<sup>70</sup>

Because the favourable year is both eschatologised and actualised in Jesus the individual, the emphasis in the passage is equally upon the message and the messenger. Bock correctly suggests that in the sermon, both message and messenger are held in an emphatic tension.<sup>71</sup> The problem of individualisation is the question of *how* Jesus brought fulfilment to the *what* that he fulfilled.<sup>72</sup>

**Fourth**, the content of the message may change by being *spiritualised* (or symbolised). This category merely means that the primary referent has been adapted in a new context. Undeniably, the context changed from Lev 25 to Isa 61. The original Jubilee legislation concerned only the land of Israel (Lev 25: 2) and land restoration took place within the borders of Israel. In Isaiah 61, slavery had become a political, foreign captivity and land restoration was the migration of exiles back to the Promised Land. Barker notes that in Isa 61: 7, the land was inherited as the exiles returned to Judah.<sup>73</sup> The midrashic context of Isa 61 is not the same as Lev 25. The original tenets of release and restoration in Lev 25 were not intended to be

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<sup>69</sup> Evans, *Luke*, p. 269.

<sup>70</sup> G. J. Brooke, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005) p. 88.

<sup>71</sup> D. L. Bock, *Luke 1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1994) p. 413.

<sup>72</sup> Finkel, *Sermon*, p. 109.

<sup>73</sup> Barker, *Jubilee*, p. 25.

metaphorical images for national, political restoration, as they are in Isa 61. It is reasonable, then, to question whether Jesus further spiritualised the Jubilee imagery in the step from Isa 61 to Luke 4.<sup>74</sup>

Many scholars correctly identify the connection between Isaiah 61 and Luke 4 as ἀφεσις.<sup>75</sup> It is assumed that the omitted phrase from Isa 61, concerning the broken-hearted, is replaced in the sermon by a phrase from Isa 58: 6 (ἀποστείλαι τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφεσει) that serves to accentuate the use of ἀφεσις.<sup>76</sup> Commentators have dealt extensively with ἀφεσις in Isa 61 so I shall limit my comments to just one.

A pivotal reason that O'Brien rejects jubiliary imagery in Luke 4 is that, while release in the OT is physical, Luke portrays it to be from sin.<sup>77</sup> Apart from the Nazareth sermon, Luke uses ἀφεσις only in the spiritual sense.<sup>78</sup> Barker's assessment illustrates O'Brien's point:

...the present form of the gospels invites us to believe that Jesus spiritualised the Jubilee, interpreting release from debt and slavery as forgiveness of sins and release from the power of Satan.<sup>79</sup>

However, Jesus is appropriating metaphorical imagery which has itself already been appropriated metaphorically (i.e. Isaiah's midrash of Lev 25).<sup>80</sup> Thus, recent commentators who recognise a metaphorical use for ἀφεσις in Luke 4 are on the right

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<sup>74</sup> This process of spiritualisation is what took place between Isa 61 and 11Q13.

<sup>75</sup> Brooke, *Scrolls*, p. 84; O'Toole, *Luke*, p. 513; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 184; Sanders, *Sin*, p. 274. See also Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 223.

<sup>76</sup> Sanders, *Sin*, p. 277; Nolland, *Luke*, p. 196; Sanders, *Isaiah 61*, p. 88; O'Toole, *Luke*, p. 512; Ringe, *Jesus*, p. 38; Koet, *Isaiah*, p. 83.

<sup>77</sup> O'Brien, *Comparison*, p. 437. Wright asserts that the NT application of the Jubilee must include both spiritual and physical applications. See n.19

<sup>78</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 223; Pao, *Luke 4*, p. 289; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 184.

<sup>79</sup> Barker, *Jubilee*, p. 32.

<sup>80</sup> Cf. Sloan, *Favorable*, pp. 118-9, 168.

course.<sup>81</sup> The adaptation from a literal use to a spiritualised use has already been accomplished in Isa 61, and Jesus continues this method, only in relation to himself.<sup>82</sup>

In fact, Jesus' sermon is programmatic for the forgiveness of sins throughout Luke's writings, but the stories that show the themes of forgiveness and salvation for the poor (such as the rich young ruler (18:18-25) and Zaccheus (19:1-10)) demonstrate that the gospel of Luke resolutely refuses to allow these images to become entirely spiritualised. Tannehill shows that while Jesus heals the blind, "seeing" and "light" have a metaphorical function in Luke.<sup>83</sup>

Wright has correctly alerted us that the tension between spiritual and physical is noticeable in Luke, particularly concerning the Jubilee.<sup>84</sup> Jesus delivers spiritual *αφεσις* to his people, but that does not mean he has to ignore their physical plight.

**Fifth** and finally, there is a noticeable decrease in the *nationalising* adaptation of the message in Luke 4. There are three points that should be noted about this topic:

1) Isa 61 does have a strong nationalised land restoration theme, but it occurs in v. 4-7, a section not quoted by Luke. The strongest nationalising phrase from Isaiah, "the day of vengeance of our God" is dropped out of the sermon's quotation.

E. Sanders notes this peculiarity:

We find, as we would expect, the theme of judgment, but we do not find teaching or proclamation which depicts or predicts the impending judgment of the nation of Israel. We would have expected such a message to accompany the revelation that Israel would be restored.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Swartley, *Traditions*, pp. 78-79; Brooke, *Scrolls*, p. 84; Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 223; Tannehill, *Narrative*, p. 66; Barker, *Jubilee*, p. 32.

<sup>82</sup> See O'Brien, *Comparison*, p. 437. Thus, O'Brien's admission that 11Q13 combines jubiliary and sin-forgiveness concepts is not helpful to his argument.

<sup>83</sup> Tannehill, *Narrative*, p. 66.

<sup>84</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 206.

<sup>85</sup> E. P. Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) p. 116. Cf. Eckardt, *Reclaiming*, p. 47.



Morris suggests that the lack of judgement was what puzzled John the Baptist (John predicted judgement in Luke 3:17), and that is the reason for his questioning of Jesus in Luke 7:22ff.<sup>86</sup> Jesus' reply to John is steeped in the jubilar language of Isa 61.

2) Jesus' message of an actualised favourable year is applied to certain underclasses of people instead of to the nation. Ellis suggests these classes represent the righteous remnant within the nation.<sup>87</sup> The quotation in Luke 4 assiduously avoids any question of land restoration (as O'Brien noted) although a national 'actualised' land restoration on scale can be seen as far back as the Jericho יריכו.

3) In 4:16-30, the only land that is mentioned lies within the stories of Elijah and Elisha. Again, the underclasses are discussed as in v. 18), and they are outside of the borders of Israel. Perhaps the stories are announcing a future ministry to the Gentiles, as many commentators suppose.<sup>88</sup> In any case, these stories direct the reader's attention away from a stringently bordered nation of Israel.

The methodological point of these five adaptations to the Jubilee message between Lev 25 to Luke 4 is this: the explicit use of an earlier text, or even an allusion to an earlier text, provides a different context than the original one—which changes interpretation. In that way, the biblical story progresses, and the OT texts move toward fulfilment.

The theological point of these five changes is that they begin to show the process by which a very physical, corporate, land based law of Jubilee could be 'fulfilled' by one man, living in a different context, in a different time. Sailhamer

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<sup>86</sup> Morris, *Luke*, p. 142.

<sup>87</sup> Ellis, *Luke*, p. 97.

<sup>88</sup> D. L. Tiede, 'The Exaltation of Jesus and the Restoration of Israel in Acts 1,' *Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986) pp. 278-286; Tannehill, *Israel*, p. 72.

calls this approach “text and commentary (the earlier parts of the OT being the text, and the later parts which develop themes the later).<sup>89</sup>

...in the later stages of the formation of the Hebrew Bible its authors were primarily concerned with making more explicit the messianic hope that was already explicit in the earlier texts.<sup>90</sup>

A number of commentators have laboured long at discerning the pattern of promise and fulfilment in Luke.<sup>91</sup> Notably, Frein observes that there are stages in fulfilment. Her primary example is 4:16-30 and 7:18-23:

These two pericopes are keys to the development of Luke’s theme of prophecy

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<sup>89</sup> J. H. Sailhamer, ‘The Messiah and the Hebrew Bible,’ *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 44 (2001) pp. 5-23. Sailhamer is specifically discussing the Messiah.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>91</sup> For a partial bibliography, see C. L. Blomberg, ‘The Law in Luke-Acts,’ *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 22 (1984) p. 53; D. L. Bock, ‘Luke, Gospel of,’ in J. B. Green, S. McKnight and I.H. Marshall, (eds) *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992) pp. 507-8. For the broader question of Luke’s use of the OT in general, the secondary literature is voluminous. The recent debate on this matter between S. Kim and the proponents of ‘The New Perspective,’ chiefly J. D. G. Dunn, is worth noting. See S. Kim, *Paul and the New Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002) pp. 1-81. See also N. Dahl, ‘The Story of Abraham in Luke-Acts,’ in L.E. Keck and J.L. Martyn (eds) *Studies in Luke-Acts* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966) pp. 139-158.

Much has been written concerning Luke’s view of the law. J. Jervell, ‘The Law in Luke-Acts,’ *Harvard Theological Review* 64.1 (1971) pp. 21-36, sees Luke as being very conservative in his view of the law. Jervell insists that Luke regards the law as an issue of ecclesiology because at the core, the question is over who are the people of God.

Blomberg takes a different approach. He notes that Jervell represents numerous scholars who see “...Lukan theology in several places as fundamentally Mosaic.” Blomberg’s position could best be presented as promise and fulfilment. Agreeing with him is M. M. B. Turner, ‘The Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law in Luke/Acts,’ in D. A. Carson (ed), *From Sabbath to the Lord’s Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids: Zonderan Corp., 1982) pp. 99-157. Blomberg’s conclusions are clear:

So also Luke sees all of the Hebrew Scriptures (Moses, prophets, and Psalms) as fulfilled in Christ—in his commandments and ethical instructions as well as in his actions in life and death. Just as New Testament historical narrative fulfils Old Testament prophecy, New Testament ethical instruction fulfils Old Testament Law (*Law*, pp. 70-71).

Both schools could agree that Luke is concerned with matters of the law because, at the centre of his theology is the question of how the OT people of God and the NT people of God come together.

and fulfilment, and they show that when Jesus fulfils his own predictions of his ministry, he also fulfils the promises of the prophets of old.<sup>92</sup>

Peterson concurs, asserting: “Almost always, contemporary evaluations are a development or expansion of ancient scriptural promises or themes.”<sup>93</sup> Crockett posits that the OT Elijah/Elisha prophecies are fulfilled by Jesus’ sermon pronouncement in a first stage, then there is a second stage pre-resurrection anticipatory fulfilment in the centurion story in Luke 7, and finally, there is a post-resurrection fulfilment in the story of Cornelius in Acts 10.<sup>94</sup>

The application of this staged fulfilment pattern to the survey of jubiliary imagery in Luke-Acts is helpful for several reasons. **First**, the five adaptations exhibited in Luke 4 appear to use jubiliary imagery in order to illuminate the fulfilment in Jesus’ person and ministry.

**Second**, the Holy Spirit plays a significant role in the early chapters of Luke, but is seldom mentioned after the Luke 4 sermon. The Spirit’s appearances return with high frequency in the early parts of Acts. Presumably, the Spirit first anointed Jesus for his ministry and then reappeared to anoint the new church as they began their ministry.<sup>95</sup>

**Third**, in Luke’s gospel, predictions about Israel’s restoration occur in 1: 68 and 2: 38, where Zachariah and Anna speak of the *λυτρωσιν* of God’s people and Jerusalem, respectively. In 2: 25, Simeon waits for the consolation of Israel, significantly presented as salvation to all people, and in 24:21, Cleopas expresses his

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<sup>92</sup> B. C. Frein, ‘Narrative Predictions, Old Testament Prophecies and Luke’s Sense of Fulfilment,’ *New Testament Studies* 40 (1994) p. 28. Cf. Sloan, *Favorable*, pp. 160, 169.

<sup>93</sup> Peterson, *Fulfilment*, p. 101.

<sup>94</sup> Crockett, *Jewish-Gentile*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>95</sup> Fitzmyer, *Luke*, p. 227: “...Luke introduces the Spirit mainly at the beginning of certain stages of his account.” Fitzmyer assumes this position due to his qualified acceptance of Conzelmann’s theory of three distinct “periods” in Luke-Acts, see above, n.64.

hope for Israel's λυτρωσιν.<sup>96</sup> This emphasis on land restoration accentuates the omission of that theme in the Nazareth sermon, which, if it is jubiliary, is the one place where it would be expected!

The statements about restoration occur in parallel with the statements about the Holy Spirit. The beginning of Luke contains frequent occurrences of Israel's restoration and frequent occurrences of the Holy Spirit. Both topics fade into the background only to return to prominence at the end of Luke and the beginning of Acts. Thus, the restoration theme resurfaces at the beginning of Acts in the disciples' question: "Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?" (1: 6). Jesus did not refute restoration, but rather, the possibility of knowing the time,<sup>97</sup> thereby recalling another motif: the 'time' words and concepts.

Further, Jesus promised his disciples both the Spirit and a geographical domain extending to the "ends of the earth" (1: 8). Moore has shown that this phrase conveys Isaianic motifs and also recapitulates the universal commission of Luke 24: 46-49.<sup>98</sup> The result is that the query for the kingdom and Jesus' reply in Acts 1:6-8 can be viewed as "...a worldwide context for the restoration of the kingdom" that will include Gentiles as well as Jews.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Tannehill, *Israel*, p. 76 says Cleopas expresses the same hope as the birth narratives: "...the resurrection has revived the hope expressed by the travellers to Emmaus but has not fulfilled it." Evans, *Luke*, p. 908 suggests Cleopas expects a different messianic deliverance than the national type.

<sup>97</sup> Tiede, *Exaltation*, p. 278; J. B. Polhill, *Acts* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1992) p. 67; Tannehill, *Israel*, p. 76; Witherington, *Acts*, p. 107; Goldingay, *Isaiah*, p. 348; Siker, *Literary*, p. 84; Kodell, *Nutshell*, p. 18.

<sup>98</sup> T. S. Moore, "To the Ends of the Earth": The Geographical and Ethnic Universalism of Acts 1: 8 in Light of Isaianic Influence on Luke, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 40.3 (1997) pp. 389-399.

<sup>99</sup> Moore, *Universalism*, p. 396; J. Van Goudever, 'The Place of Israel in Luke's Gospel,' *Novum Testamentum* 8 (1966) p. 113; R. N. Longenecker, *Acts* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995) p. 52; Polhill, *Acts*, p. 84.

### **Summary of Jesus and Fulfilment in Luke 4:16-30**

In conclusion, two things appear to be happening in the Nazareth sermon in terms of Jesus and his fulfilment of the Jubilee. **First**, the themes of the Jubilee are brought to focus on Jesus himself. His proclamation fulfils the proclamation of Jubilee and his provision of liberty fulfils לְרִירוֹת. The sermon in Luke 4 addressed the first tenet of release from bondage, the meaning of which had been adapted through the literature from an original, literal, agriculturally based servitude to a (mostly) metaphorical forgiveness of sins. The second tenet of land restoration is promised in the beginning of Luke and then is subsequently addressed in a prominent way in the beginning chapters of Acts (1: 6, 8; 3: 20-21; 4: 32-37; 5: 1-11). Just as there are other ‘staged’ fulfilments in Luke, so the Jubilee tenets are fulfilled in two stages, coinciding with the two-fold anointing of the Holy Spirit—the promise of ἀφεσις before the cross, the promise of restoration after. The pivot point is the resurrection.

**Second**, the fulfilment of the two Jubilee themes appears to correspond to the Jubilee type-scene, which was suggested as the definition of a יוֹבֵל event.<sup>100</sup> The five motifs include:

- 1) A holy God (Jesus)
- 2) An encounter with him (actualised in Luke 4 and Peter’s sermon in Acts 2)
- 3) His holy people are included (Israel in Luke 4 and the Gentiles in Acts 2);
- 4) He delivers something to them at the meeting (ἀφεσις in Luke 4 and the newly-defined kingdom in Acts 2)
- 5) The place of meeting remains a time (the acceptable year in Luke 4 and the fulfilled days, cf. Acts 2:1) rather than a geographical locale.

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<sup>100</sup> See p. 105.

## NT Theological Angle

### Inauguration and the Resurrection

The first aim of this section is to connect the ideas of inauguration and the eighth-day with their fulfilment in Jesus' resurrection of the NT. That is the fulfilment of the theme of redemption.

A connection of the resurrection with the eighth-day is established in two ways. **First**, there is a *dating formula* common to all the gospels concerning the timing of the resurrection. The formulaic phrase, *τη δε μια των σαββατων* ('the first day of the week'), occurs with very little variation among the four accounts. Each time it occurs, the phrase follows a deliberate mention of the Sabbath day preceding the day of resurrection (Mt 28:1; Mk 16:1; Luke 23:56). John mentioned the Day of Preparation instead (19:42), by which he meant the Friday before the Sabbath.<sup>101</sup> This phrase locates the day of resurrection in the familiar 7+1 format. Barrett points out "The plural *σαββατα* is used with singular meaning for both 'Sabbath' and 'week.'"<sup>102</sup> Morris concurs; saying that the Sabbath was the seventh day and thus Sunday was the first day.<sup>103</sup> The Christian tendency to see the first-day and the eighth-day as the same was noted earlier with 2 Enoch.<sup>104</sup> Some commentators interpret the resurrection as the eighth-day.<sup>105</sup>

Therefore, when all of the resurrection appearances occur on the same day in Luke, it is as much a statement of the nature of that day as a retelling of events.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978) p. 560.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid. p. 562.

<sup>103</sup> Morris, *Luke*, p. 333. See Harrison, *Leviticus*, p. 216.

<sup>104</sup> See above, p.133.

<sup>105</sup> Ellis, *Luke*, p. 272.

<sup>106</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, p. 107.

Matthew and Mark do not record any other data pertinent to the eighth-day, but still include this formula in their accounts, though it complicates their chronology.<sup>107</sup>

**Second**, a link is established between the eighth-day and resurrection by literary connections. Luke contains a great deal of material relevant to the initial formula and the eighth-day. There are several examples of this:

1) Within the formula he includes a  $\mu\epsilon\nu\ldots\delta\epsilon$  device (on the one hand...on the other) so 23:56 and 24:1 read as one unit, despite the chapter break.<sup>108</sup> This unity accentuates both the connection and distinction between the Sabbath and the first day.

2) Chapter 24 seeks to convey a message. That message is not transmitted through the resurrection *per se*, but instead by Jesus' *appearances* on the eighth-day—synonymous with the first-day (24:1, 13, 33).

3) Each of the appearances proclaims the same message, namely that the action of Jesus constitutes a completion/inauguration of the new paradigm of salvation (24:7, 25-26, 44-46).

4) Like the transfiguration (9:30), the initial witnesses to the resurrection are the  $\alpha\nu\delta\rho\epsilon\varsigma\ \delta\upsilon\omicron$ , who like the careers of Moses and Elijah, bear witness to this ultimate inaugural event.

5) Each of Jesus' appearances were real, communicating the message that: "The beginning of this week marks the dawning of a new beginning for humanity."<sup>109</sup>

Because of the resurrection, Sunday had early on become the 'Festival of the resurrection'<sup>110</sup> that marked the presence of Jesus on that day as a continuing event.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Cf. R.T. France, *Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997) p. 406; C.S. Mann, *Mark* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1986) p. 664; D.A. Carson, 'Matthew,' in F.E. Gaebelin (gen. ed.), *The Expositor's Bible Commentary vol 8*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984) p. 587.

<sup>108</sup> Evans, *Luke*, p. 893; Marshall, *Luke*, p. 883.

<sup>109</sup> D. Garland, *Mark* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996) p. 612.

The new age that dawned at Jesus' resurrection is the fulfilment of the Jubilee—it provides redemption and reconciliation for the time period ahead.

Although the early church fathers' interpretations of the eighth-day were prompted by circumcision, their assertions of the eighth-day as equal to the first became crystallised. Justin Martyr, in his Dialogue with Trypho (thought to be around A.D. 160<sup>112</sup>) wrote:

...through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ. For the first day after the Sabbath, remaining the first of all the days, is called however, the eighth, according to all the number of all the days of the cycle, and [yet] remains the first.<sup>113</sup>

This confirms the interpretation of the gospel's dating formula. The resurrection is the first day of the week—the day after the Sabbath—yet it remains the eighth.

The Epistle to Barnabas is an earlier witness,<sup>114</sup> and a more persuasive one. The Epistle to Barnabas is a tract given to the task of reinterpreting Jewish religious elements so they are acceptable to Christians. Thus, it is an exercise in ancient hermeneutics.<sup>115</sup> In this section, the eighth-day concept is combined with that of inauguration:

Finally He saith to them; Your new moons and your sabbaths I cannot away with. Ye see what is his meaning; it is not your present sabbaths that are acceptable [unto Me], but the sabbath which I have made, in the which,

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<sup>110</sup> J. N. Sanders and B. A. Mastin, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1988) p. 431. Cf. Kellogg, *Leviticus*, p. 513, who called the Jubilee by this name because of the eighth-day.

<sup>111</sup> B. Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1972) p. 599.

<sup>112</sup> D. W. Bercot (ed.), *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998) p. 228.

<sup>113</sup> A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, A.C. Coxe (eds.) *The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. 1* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2004) p. 215.

<sup>114</sup> J. C. Treat, 'Barnabas, Epistle of,' in D.N. Freedman (ed.) *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1992) 1.614 places it between A.D. 70 and 135.

<sup>115</sup> J. Trigg, 'The Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists,' in A.J. Hauser and D.F. Watson (eds.) *A History of Biblical Interpretation, vol 1: The Ancient Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003) p. 314.



when I have set all things at rest, I will make the beginning of the eighth day which is the beginning of another world. Wherefore also we keep the eighth day for rejoicing, in the which also Jesus rose from the dead, and having been manifested ascended into the heavens.<sup>116</sup>

Prostmeier notes that the very point of the eighth-day to Barnabas is the celebration of the eschatological new creation as over against the old Sabbath.<sup>117</sup> The Sabbath is superseded by the eighth-day, which is, in effect, a new, acceptable Sabbath. It is the completion of the old and the inauguration of the new.

In several passages leading up to this eighth-day explanation, Barnabas had discussed the idea of a day as equal to a thousand years (15:5), much as was seen with 2 Enoch. While his work has prompted some millenarian bickering,<sup>118</sup> the point that Barnabas strove to make was that Christian worship on the eighth-day did not simply replace Jewish worship of the seventh day,<sup>119</sup> rather, it was a cosmic renovation that ended one world and created another.<sup>120</sup>

### **Summary of the Eighth-day in the NT:**

The eighth-day theme in this paper has been traced through the writings of the OT and, briefly, through some Second Temple traditions. The primary meaning of the eighth-day in the various texts has been described as that of inauguration.<sup>121</sup> The eighth-day is the culmination of the old and the beginning of a new phase.

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<sup>116</sup> J. B. Lightfoot and J. R. Harmer, *The Apostolic Fathers* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1987) p. 284.

<sup>117</sup> F. R. Prostmeier, *Der Barnabasbrief* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999) 496, p. 501.

<sup>118</sup> J. C. Paget, *The Epistle of Barnabas: Outlook and Background* (Tubingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994) p. 170.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.* p. 171.

<sup>120</sup> J. N. Rhodes, *The Epistle of Barnabas and the Deuteronomic Tradition* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) p. 70. For a full treatment of the eighth-day in the patristic period, see R. Staats, 'Ogdoas als ein Symbol fur die Auferstehung,' *Vigilae Christianae* 26 (1972) 29-52.

<sup>121</sup> There is also a strong motif of reconciliation (e.g. the ritual purity sacrifices) that also resonates with the resurrection.

This interpretation of the eighth-day is consistent with that of the Jubilee. At the end of the fifty years, the old Jubilee period came to an end; redemption was applied and land restored. The proclamation on Yom Kippur began a new era. On a cosmic scale, this is exactly what happened at the resurrection, the fulfilment of the eighth-day. The complication, as Wright points out, is that the disciples were expecting a full restoration of land, and struggled to understand the already...not yet idea.<sup>122</sup>

From the NT and early father's perspective, George's conclusion to the matter provides a fitting summary:

In the Alexandrian theological tradition, the cycle of the seven-day week was the symbol of history, both human and cosmic. The problem of this cycle is that it returns to itself endlessly. The recurring cycle of the week provides no exit, no hope. Human life is caught in the vicious circle of this dismal return.

So Sunday is proposed both as the first day of the week and as the "eighth day," which breaks the cycle. Sunday as the first day stands for the beginning of all creation. As the day of the resurrection of Christ, it represents the renewal of all creation. All life that is subject to death and corruption is renewed in Christ. As the eighth day, Sunday symbolizes the age to come, the eternal life...Sunday is the initial point of creation and re-creation, as well as the transition point between history and eschatology.<sup>123</sup>

### **Inauguration, Jubilee and Pentecost:**

The concern of this section is how Pentecost is connected to the eighth-day and Jubilee. Jesus fulfilled the Jubilee, and inaugurated a new age by his resurrection. The redemption of that new age resulted in the restoration begun at Pentecost. If that is correct, then Pentecost should have some of the same themes, ideas and OT imagery in it as that of Jesus' fulfilment.

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<sup>122</sup> Wright, *OT Ethics*, p. 206

<sup>123</sup> K. M. George, 'Sunday, Pentecost and the Jubilee Tradition: A Patristic Perspective,' in H. Ucko (ed.) *The Jubilee Challenge: Utopia or Possibility?* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1997) p. 100.

Although interpretation of Luke's account of Pentecost is relatively consistent, an important question remains concerning the connection between the OT Pentecost festival and the NT Pentecost event. The common Greek name ties the Spirit-giving event to the Feast of Weeks. Scholars have debated the *terminus a quo* of Firstfruits, because that specific date impacts the attempt to typologically interpret the crucifixion as a fulfilment of Passover; and the resurrection as a fulfilment of Firstfruits; and the Spirit's advent as a fulfilment of Pentecost.<sup>124</sup> Subsequently, attention has been paid to the late Second Temple tradition (perhaps originating from *Jubilees* 6:17-19) that says the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost) commemorates the giving of the law at Sinai.<sup>125</sup>

In an article investigating the connection of Weeks and Sinai, Weinfeld presents several arguments for an earlier origin for this tradition than is presently held—which is 70 C.E. at the earliest.<sup>126</sup> He first locates a connection in the Psalter. He notes that Psalm 81 contains elements that are reflective of both Sinai and of Pentecost. In 81: 3 there is a blowing of the horn for a new moon and feast day, which Weinfeld argues is not the New Year, but a celebration of covenant renewal. He derives this interpretation from the third month ceremony in 2 Chron 15:14: "They took an oath to the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and

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<sup>124</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 65; K. Howard and M. Rosenthal, *The Feasts of the Lord* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1997) p. 23. Cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 306.

<sup>125</sup> W. Neil, *The Acts of the Apostles*, NCB (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1973) p. 72; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1998) pp. 233-4; Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 65.

<sup>126</sup> M. Weinfeld, 'Pentecost as Festival of the Giving of the Law,' *Immanuel* 8 (1978) pp. 7-18. Cf. E. Lohse, 'Πεντεκοστή,' in in G. Kittel, G. Friedrich (eds.) G. Bromiley, trans. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968) 6:48.

with horns.”<sup>127</sup> Weinfeld also takes note that the horn plays a significant role for both Jubilee and Pentecost.<sup>128</sup>

He also notes the traditions from the Second Temple period describing the law revealed at Sinai appearing as flames emanating from the deity’s mouth, and that these flames were subsequently divided into seventy “tongues” (or languages) of the world.<sup>129</sup>

Fitzmyer posits two additional lines of argument equating Sinai and Pentecost. First, Israel arrived at Sinai in the third month (Exod 19:1) and Pentecost occurred in the middle of the third month. Second, in *Jubilees* 1:1; 6:17-19, *Shavuot* is presented as the festival of covenant renewal. Fitzmyer also relates some interesting verbal allusions between Acts 2 and Exod 19-20.<sup>130</sup>

Some commentators, however, remain unconvinced that the connection between Sinai and Pentecost extends back before the Christian era—if there is a connection at all.<sup>131</sup> However, the reason to consider a connection is the common nature of the two events. Sinai was a day of inauguration (of the Law) marked by the blowing of the *יֹבֵל* trumpet; the occasion was an encounter between Yahweh and his people. The NT Pentecost was also a day of inauguration (of the Spirit) and it also was an encounter with Yahweh as he sent flames of fire upon the nascent community. Pentecost also has an intimate connection to the Jubilee—perhaps by the trumpet as Weinfeld suggests—but certainly by the counting method to ascertain their occurrences— $7 \times 7 + 1 = 50$ .

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid. p. 10. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 233.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. p. 11.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid. p. 14.

<sup>130</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 234.

<sup>131</sup> See R. F. O’Toole, ‘Acts 2:30 and the Davidic Covenant of Pentecost,’ *Journal of Biblical Literature* 102.2 (1983) pp. 245-258.

The counting of the two schemes is exact, except for the time measurements (fifty days compared to fifty years) and this fact has been noticed far more by OT commentators than NT writers, though even there without uniformity.<sup>132</sup> Bergsma, in his discussion of the Jubilee, quotes Wellhausen for correspondence between Jubilee and the OT Pentecost:

In the Priestly Code the year of jubilee is further added to supplement in turn the sabbatical year (Lev. xxv 8 seq.). As the latter is framed to correspond with the seventh day, so the former corresponds with the fiftieth, i.e. with Pentecost, as is easily perceived from the parallelism of Lev. xxv. 8 with Lev. xxiii. 15.<sup>133</sup>

Therefore, it seems likely that the interpretation of Acts 2 (and thereby later sections of Acts) is informed by the counting of Weeks and Jubilee and is, in some measure, connected to their fulfilment.<sup>134</sup>

It is significant, then, that Pentecost is frequently referred to by the word for the eighth-day convocation, **עֶצְרָת**.<sup>135</sup> Josephus is perhaps the most well known of these writers and he provides the Aramaic version of the title:

When a week of weeks has passed over after this sacrifice (which contains forty and nine days) on the fiftieth day, which is Pentecost, but is called by the Hebrews *Asartha*, which signifies *Pentecost*...<sup>136</sup> (italics his)

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<sup>132</sup> J. H. Kurtz, *Offerings, Sacrifices and Worship in the Old Testament*, J. Martin, trans. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998) p. 377, “The fifty day’s harvest was as it were a jubilee period in miniature.” See also Kaiser, *Leviticus*, p. 1171; Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, pp. 1999, 2002; Gane, *Leviticus*, p. 434; Levine, *Leviticus*, pp. 158-9. Fitzmyer’s commentary on Acts is a notable exception to this statement.

<sup>133</sup> Bergsma, *Jubilee*, n. 48.

<sup>134</sup> Kleinig, *Leviticus*, p. 503, senses some connection when he says: “Just as there was a “week” of days, so this constituted a “week” of weeks. In symbolic terms, the fiftieth day, the Day of Weeks, was the eighth day. It therefore corresponded to the eighth day of the Feast of Booths.”

<sup>135</sup> See the lists in Hayward, *Israel*, p. 145 and Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 1990. Note also Weinfeld, *Pentecost*, p. 12-13 where he discusses the solemn assembly nature of **עֶצְרָת**.

<sup>136</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, 3.10.6 (252).

Josephus' designation demonstrates his recognition that the nature of Pentecost is an eighth-day event, like the OT convocations.

**In summary**, the type of Jubilee land restoration finds its antitype in Jesus' giving of the Spirit at Pentecost for the global mission of the church. The kingdom had begun.

### **NT Social and Economic Angles**

The theological themes of Jubilee find their typological fulfilment in the Christ event. The laws within the social and economic angles of the Jubilee were a description of the detailed response to the *typical* nature of the Jubilee, so the social and economic actions of the early church are the detailed response to the fulfilled antitypical themes.

These two angles both occur in one passage, Acts 4:32-5:11. The passage consists of a summary statement describing community life in the early church (4:32-35), which is then followed by two illustrations of behaviour: one exemplary (Barnabas in 4:36-37) and one faulty (Ananias and Sapphira in 5:1-11).<sup>137</sup>

The aim of the first section (4:32-35) is to examine the response of the early church as parallel to the response required in the Jubilee legislation. It is a social and economic response centred around the theological idea of the proclamation of the resurrection. The Jubilee laws were prescriptive and Acts 4: 32-35 is descriptive. Together, they portray the need for God's people to practise the 'ethics of brotherhood.'

The second section, Acts 5:1-11, examines the relation of the Jubilee to the story of Ananias and Sapphira. I will suggest that the intertextual connections with the Jubilee may help explain their sudden deaths. The story will be explored as a type-

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<sup>137</sup> I. H. Marshall, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company 1980) p. 108.

scene with stories from Eden and Jericho with the aim of showing that, although the Jubilee was fulfilled in Christ, its final complete fulfilment is still to come. The type-scene alerts us that there is another ‘cycle’ to be run before the consummation arrives.

#### **Acts 4:32-35**

Commentators have discerned that this passage consists of two different views of communal and private property separated by v. 33—considered by some to be an insertion.<sup>138</sup> The two varying perspectives of property ownership are not separated by v. 33; rather they are tied together by the theological reality of the resurrection.<sup>139</sup>

The resurrection is central here. Specifically, the belief in the resurrection is what makes the community who they were, “those who believed” (4:32). A specific category described them: “one heart and soul,”<sup>140</sup> and specific activities marked them: the sharing of goods, but even more, the proclamation of the resurrection. The first summary passage in Acts, 2:42-47, which 4:32-35 significantly parallels, calls this situation *κοινωνία*. This also parallels the concept of brotherhood in the Jubilee based on the redemption of the Exodus. The ethical response of both the Jubilee and the early church comes through and within the covenant community, described in Acts 4:32 as the ones who believed.<sup>141</sup>

The first view of property in this community (4:32) is one where ownership is retained but the rights are given up for the brethren.<sup>142</sup> It is an unqualified sharing

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<sup>138</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 106; Polhill, *Acts*, p. 152; E. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971) pp. 232-3.

<sup>139</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 106.

<sup>140</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 231, points out that this is a common OT idiom, especially in Deuteronomy. His list includes: Deut 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 13:4; 26:16; 30:2, 6, 10.

<sup>141</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, p. 105, says v. 33 functions as 2:42 in focusing the community around the message/worship.

<sup>142</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, pp. 232-3.

based on ones' participation in a closely joined group.<sup>143</sup> Thus, it was a continual and customary way of viewing possessions within the community; it was how the early church did 'community care.'<sup>144</sup>

Acts commentators have debated the use of Greek phrases that call to mind ideas from Aristotle,<sup>145</sup> and, perhaps, from Plato.<sup>146</sup> Witherington leans toward Aristotle and comments: "Aristotle said that true friends held everything in common (απαντα κοινα, cf. Acts 2:44) and were of one mind (ψυχη μια- Nic. Eth. 9.8.2)"<sup>147</sup> The debate has been whether these allusions present the early community as an example of the ideal, 'utopian' state,<sup>148</sup> or as an example and exhortation towards the ideal of Greek friendship.<sup>149</sup> Mitchell observes that the two views are not compatible and that the utopian view is detrimental to any interpretation of the passage that includes a prescriptive element. In other words, if this short passage only 'describes' the early community as an ideal, then it cannot be an effective tool for instruction.<sup>150</sup>

Mitchell proceeds to argue that Luke hoped to remove any vestige of reciprocity in the friendship ideal that would prohibit the early community from sharing possessions. In particular, this passage shows that the disciples and apostles

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<sup>143</sup> Neil, *Acts*, p. 93; Polhill, *Acts*, p. 152. Cf. A. C. Mitchell, 'The Social Function of Friendship in Acts 2:44-47 and 4:32-37,' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 111.2 (1992) p. 262ff; G. E. Sterling, "'Athletes of Virtue': An Analysis of the Summaries in Acts (2:41-47; 4:32-35; 5:12-16)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113.4 (1994) p.683.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 107.

<sup>145</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, p. 152; Mitchell, *Friendship*, pp. 258-262; Sterling, *Athletes*, pp. 687-8.

<sup>146</sup> D. L. Mealand, 'Community of Goods and Utopian Allusions in Acts II-IV,' *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 28 (1977) pp. 96-99.

<sup>147</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, p. 205.

<sup>148</sup> Mealand, *Community*, p. 97; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 233. Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, p.151-2, where he discusses both views.

<sup>149</sup> Mitchell, *Friendship*, pp. 255-272.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid. p. 258. See also Witherington, *Acts*, p. 205.



were concerned that community care cross socio-economic boundaries.<sup>151</sup> This view of friendship is more congruent with both the heavy OT imagery of community care and with the Jubilee influences that surfaces in v. 34.

By juxtaposing an allusion to Deut 15:4 with allusions to Greek ideals, Acts 4 seems to be arguing that the Greek ideal is realised within the sphere of biblical fulfilment—those believing, sharing, proclaiming and experiencing great grace. The two ideals are not far removed:

“Aristotle poses the question, “How ought one to live amongst human beings?” That clarifies why he is dealing with *philia* and hints at an answer to why the perfect friendship is between good humans: it is because the virtuous behave justly towards others and will encourage others to be more just; and the two friends will be alike and challenge one another because they are both striving in the same direction...”<sup>152</sup>

It is not difficult to conclude what this passage has done to the initial perspective of property. The friendship virtues of “good” and “just” have been joined and subjugated to the OT ideal of “heart and soul” (v. 32) that together comprise the response by the early church. Both sets of virtues orbit around the witness of the resurrection so that the challenge becomes exactly what Mitchell has described; community care crossing social barriers.<sup>153</sup>

After the central verse about the resurrection (v. 33), Luke portrays a second view of property in the early community. It seems that there was a common fund used to distribute aid to those in need (cf. 2:45). Periodically (the force of the iterative imperfects here in 4:34-35,<sup>154</sup>), a well off member would sell property and dedicate

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid. p. 272.

<sup>152</sup> N. Dennis, “Aristotle on Love and Friendship,” (Unpublished University of Chicago paper, 2007) p. 4.

<sup>153</sup> Mitchell, *Friendship*, p. 258.

<sup>154</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 107.

the proceeds to replenish the fund.<sup>155</sup> Verse 34 alludes to Deuteronomy and presumably presents the activity of vv. 34-35 as a fulfilment of Deut 15:4:

There will, however, be no one in need among you, because the LORD is sure to bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you as a possession to occupy.

The context suggests that this κοινωνία sharing is the fulfilment of the OT economic angle of life in the land. The communal “possessions” of Yahweh’s people, within their respective covenants is the focus of both passages. In that sense, this is the NT expression of the ‘interim-years’ ethics of the Jubilee—a community’s behaviour in light of the resurrection, the fulfilment of the Jubilee.

Thus, the ritual of the voluntary dedication of property was done in view of the eschatological meaning of the Jubilee. Ultimately, the thrust of the ritual in the new age is that money devoted because of belief in the resurrection, is to be considered as a sacred gift to the Lord himself. As Polhill says, it is a gift to Christ.<sup>156</sup> Witherington, correctly notes that this giving aspect of the community not only as it was (descriptive) but, how it should be (prescriptive).<sup>157</sup> De Chiricho writes:

In the preaching of the gospel, in the miracles done by God through the disciples, in the sharing of wealth between the believers, the church could be recognized as the true *Jubilee community* that announces, demonstrates and experiences the Jubilee of the Lord.<sup>158</sup> (italics his)

The point, again, is that these activities identify the “Jubilee community” precisely because the activities (in response to the cross and the resurrection) are parallel to those required as a response to the Jubilee.

The force of the OT dedicatory ritual based on the law would wane with the decision of the Jerusalem Council in Acts 15, but the force of the new covenant-based

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<sup>155</sup>Cf. Witherington, *Acts*, p. 207.

<sup>156</sup>Polhill, *Acts*, p. 153.

<sup>157</sup>Witherington, *Acts*, p. 205.

<sup>158</sup>De Chiricho, *Biblical Jubilee*, p. 360.

community care ethic would not. It is important to note that at Paul's 'missionary commissioning' by the apostles, they requested that he "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10), and Paul's writings are resplendent with the theological aspects of the offerings given both to himself and to the Jerusalem church from Gentile believers.<sup>159</sup>

As in Acts 4, community care was inseparably partnered with resurrection proclamation,<sup>160</sup> and that produced great grace upon the community. That is the fulfilment of the Jubilee theology and the Jubilee response. I can see no textual indication allowing us to ever separate the examples from the two covenants within the life of the church. As Longenecker says:

Experientially, the spiritual oneness the believers found to be a living reality through their common allegiance to Jesus, must, they realized, be expressed in caring for the physical needs of the Christian brothers and sisters. Indeed, their integrity as a community of faith depended on their doing this.<sup>161</sup>

#### **Acts 5: 1-11**<sup>162</sup>

This section has two aims. The first is to explore the idea that the Jubilee's connection to the story of Ananias and Sapphira may help to explain the sudden death the two suffered. The second aim is to discuss the story of Ananias and Sapphira as one of three type-scenes in the Bible (the other two are the 'Fall' in the Garden of Eden and Achan's sin at Jericho). The point of this part of the study is to show that certain moments of fulfilment that come by God's activity within the meta-narrative are followed by an immediate failure on the part of his people. That type-scene of immediate failure communicates that the final stage of redemption and restoration has not been reached—there is another "cycle" to be run in the history of redemption.

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<sup>159</sup> The secondary literature concerning this topic is voluminous. Particularly helpful, however, has been D. Georgi, *Remembering the Poor: The History of Paul's Collection for Jerusalem* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992).

<sup>160</sup> Neil, *Acts*, p. 93.

<sup>161</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 106.

<sup>162</sup> My father, Harold Hoch, pointed me to this passage and encouraged me, as he suspected it might concern my topic.

By virtue of the association of the Jubilee with the type-scene of Ananias and Sapphira, we may conclude that the ideals of the Jubilee have not reached their completion and the Jubilee ‘ethics of brotherhood,’ are still in effect as the way of life for those in Christ, until the final restoration.

### **The Connection of Jubilee with Acts 5:**

The point of connection between Acts 5 and the Jubilee appears to be the common idea of the dedication of sold land. In Acts 5, the money from the sale of land is dedicated. In Leviticus 27:19-21, the field itself is dedicated to the sanctuary.

There are a number of connections between Lev 27 and the story of Ananias and Sapphira, which has been acknowledged as one of the most elusive passages in the NT.<sup>163</sup> Perhaps the best way to investigate the connections with the Jubilee in this passage is to consider the positive example of Barnabas first, and then examine the negative example of Ananias and Sapphira.

“There was a Levite, a native of Cyprus, Joseph, to whom the apostles gave the name Barnabas (which means ‘son of encouragement’). He sold a field that belonged to him, then brought the money, and laid it at the apostles’ feet.” (4:36-37)

The **first** connection is that the phrase *τους ποδας των αποστολων* (“the feet of the apostles”) appears to describe the place of dedication, just as the field is brought to the sanctuary in Lev 27. The phrase occurs three times within this passage (4:35, 37; 5:2) but never again in the book of Acts. All three instances of the phrase have the same setting: property of some sort is sold and then the proceeds are taken to the apostle’s and placed, in this formal act, at their disposal. Apparently, this was the means of moving those proceeds from individual ownership to the community distribution network (cf. 2:45).

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<sup>163</sup> J. D. M. Derrett, ‘Ananias, Sapphira, and the Right of Property,’ *The Downside Review* 89 (1971) p. 225; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 110; Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 110.

Many commentators have correctly interpreted this phrase as the means of ‘dedicating’ the funds to the ministry in a legal transfer, not simply the gifting of money to the apostles.<sup>164</sup> Polhill develops this idea:

But what of the practice of laying the proceeds at the apostle’s feet? The gesture was one of submission to another. At this point, the Twelve were the representatives appointed by Christ as the foundation of the true people of God. The submission was not to them but to the one they represented. To lay one’s gift at their feet was to offer it to Christ.<sup>165</sup>

Therefore, it appears that the distinct phrase, τοὺς ποδας τῶν ἀποστόλων is the specific description of an act of religious dedication done by a definite transaction.

The **second** connection to Lev 27 is the mention of Barnabas as a Levite.<sup>166</sup> His activity of selling property and dedicating the money is striking because he is a Levite, and, according to the OT law, Levites were not to own land or fields. His tribal ancestry has properly alerted commentators to the problem of a Levite owning property in Palestine, where the story occurs. There are several OT passages that are clear that Levites were not to own property among the other Israelites.<sup>167</sup>

Common explanations for the ostensible problem of Barnabas owning land are that by the time of the NT, the laws of Levite land tenure had become either a ‘dead letter,’<sup>168</sup> or were possibly seen as a theoretical matter,<sup>169</sup> whose relevance barely lingered in NT times. That is quite likely; but that explanation only serves to accentuate the intertextual connections of Levites, land ownership, and dedication,

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<sup>164</sup> Derrett, *Ananias*, p. 227; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 109; Neil, *Acts*, p. 94; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 314; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 231, n. 5.

<sup>165</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, p. 153.

<sup>166</sup> P.J. Gloag, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Minneapolis: Klock and Klock Publishers, 1979 reprint) pp. 167-8 notes that there must have been some reason that Barnabas was singled out as an example when others were doing the same thing.

<sup>167</sup> Two explicit references are Num 18: 24 and Deut 10:9.

<sup>168</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, p. 154; F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1954) p. 109; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 110; Cf. Neil, *Acts*, p. 94.

<sup>169</sup> R. B. Rackham, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) p. 63.

which are, in turn, tied to the Jubilee.<sup>170</sup> Many commentators recognise that the property in question could have been in Cyprus rather than Palestine.<sup>171</sup>

The rules concerning Levite ownership of property are significant in the Jubilee legislation, particularly the ‘interim-years’ regulations (Lev 25:32-34). A distinction must be made to refine the ideas of ‘ownership’ in the law.

There are two kinds of “ownership” discussed in the OT. The first is an inheritance—land given to a family by Yahweh at the time of entry into the land (Josh 13-21). Frequently, during the account of distribution, the comment is made that the Levites received no portion in the inheritance because their inheritance was the offerings of fire (13:14)—Yahweh himself (Josh 13:33). The Levites received towns and surrounding pastureland for their dwelling place (14:4; 21:1-42. Cf. Lev 25:32-34), but were excluded from land inheritance.

The frequent incidence of this topic in the OT provides an alert that in Acts 4 we may have an intertextual allusion, and that the issue is not simply a “dead letter,” but more likely, an occurrence of an old topic in a new context. Intertextual connections alert us to the development of biblical themes within the canon, and sometimes of their typological fulfilment. From that perspective, the issue of property and property dedication, Levites and land ownership, and brotherly care in 4:32-34 all sound very similar to what has gone before.

The second type of “ownership” can only be deemed so with qualifications. As discussed in chapter three, the law allowed for someone to “purchase” property in Israel for the duration of the interim-years between Jubilees. Thus, a normal “purchase” was actually a controlling lease. This type of ownership included the

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<sup>170</sup> Although subjective, my immediate response to this story after spending time in the laws of Jubilee was surprise over a Levite owning property

<sup>171</sup> R. K. Hughes, *Acts* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996) p. 75.

redemption of property for kinsmen and was not forbidden to the tribe of Levi. They could ‘own’ property for 49 years. In fact, the activity of Jeremiah in redeeming the field of his cousin Hanamel (Jer 32:7ff) shows that priests (cf. Jer 1:1) could participate in this second type of ‘interim’ land tenure. Often, Jeremiah 32 is interpreted to be illustrating the first type of ownership (inherited land) and is referenced as proof of the fact of the law being a ‘dead letter.’<sup>172</sup>

Therefore, it is important that the word used in Acts 4:37 to describe Barnabas’ ownership is *υπερχοντος*, which emphasises the permanence of his ownership. It is used in the singular, whereas the plural was used earlier in 4:32 to describe the possessions (*υπερχοντων*) of the community. Witherington points out “The phrase *κτητορες χωριον* refers to owners of land...”<sup>173</sup>

The **third** connection is the similarity of vocabulary between Acts 4-5 and the Jubilee laws. This similarity is helpful to confirm that both the land tenure and dedication laws are relevant to this passage in Acts.

The words used in the summary statements of church life (2:43-47 and 4:32-35) to describe the church members’ personal property are somewhat general.<sup>174</sup> The words *κτηματα* and *υπαρξεις* are used in 2:45, then, we find *χωριον* in 4:34 and 5:3, but *κτημα* in 5:1, *υπαρχω* in 4:32, 34, 37 and *πιπρασκω* in 4:34.

However, among the words used to describe the personal property of the early church, two words are of special interest. 4:34 specifically mentions the *οικων* (houses) and then in 4:37, Barnabas sold an *αγρον* (field). Bruce alerts us to the fact

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<sup>172</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, p. 154; Longenecker, *Acts*, p.108; Rackham, *Acts*, p. 63; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 110; Witherington, *Acts*, p. 209; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 232.

<sup>173</sup> Witherington, *Acts*, p. 207. He states again on p. 208: “Notice that Luke calls those who give in this text “owners,” which comports with what he will say in Acts 5.”

<sup>174</sup> C. S. C. Williams, *The Acts of the Apostles*, HNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1964) p. 73.

that ἀγρος does not occur again in the book of Acts. Elsewhere in Acts, and even again in this passage, the word χωρα is used for a “field.”<sup>175</sup>

Of the two people who exemplify early church life, apparently juxtaposed to help interpret each other, it is curious that one (Barnabas) sells an ἀγρος, and the other (Ananias) sells a χωρα. Perhaps this solitary occurrence of ἀγρος can help us in understanding Barnabas’ actions.

Significantly, these two specific words for are the same two words in the Jubilee legislation of the LXX concerning Levite’s houses and fields (Lev 25: 32-34). Again, the connections serve to tease the readers’ minds in the direction of the Jubilee. However, as Leonard cautioned earlier, all intertextual allusions are not equal in their ability to connect passages in reader’s minds.<sup>176</sup> The Jubilee’s influence for the interpretation of Acts 5 cannot be established simply by correspondence of two similar words in the passages.

Rather, as mentioned, the antecedent of the Barnabas story appears to be the field dedication of Lev 27. Barnabas sold a field (specifically an ἀγρος), which he apparently owned outright, and then he took the proceeds and laid it at the apostles’ feet. His actions closely parallel the voluntary dedication of a field to the sanctuary in Lev 27:19-21.

The field in Lev 27 is described in 27:16 as an “inherited land holding” (ἡ κτήνη; in the LXX, του αγρου της κατασχεσεως αυτου). Barnabas’ land, if it had been in Cyprus, would have technically fallen outside of the OT land tenure

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<sup>175</sup> Bruce, *Acts*, p. 109, n. 45.

<sup>176</sup> See p. 59, n. 206.



system,<sup>177</sup> but his subsequent actions show his activity within Palestine to be harmonious with this law. The original law reads:

And if the one who consecrates the field (αγρος) wishes to redeem it, then one fifth shall be added to its assessed value, and it shall revert to the original owner; but if the field is not redeemed, or if it has been sold to someone else, it shall no longer be redeemable. But when the field is released in the jubilee, it shall be holy to the LORD as a devoted field; it becomes the priest's holding. (Lev 27:19-21)

Several details should be noted here. **First**, these instructions for land sale revolve around the Jubilee. The price of the land itself is determined by a combination of two factors: the amount of seed required to sow the field (Lev 27:16), and the number of years remaining until the next Jubilee (Lev 25:14-17).<sup>178</sup> The amount of seed (in homers) required to sow a field determined its valuation.<sup>179</sup> For example, a field requiring one homer of seed might be worth one shekel per year, thus rendering the field worth fifty shekels in a Jubilee cycle.<sup>180</sup>

The point is that land value should have revolved around the Jubilee. That would have meant nothing on Cyprus, and perhaps nothing in the Judea of Acts, if the law was a 'dead letter,' but it should have been the method used as people sold their land and dedicated it (4:34). For our purposes, the important part of the legislation deals with what happened to the money *after* it was sold.

The **second** detail is that the field in Lev 27 was dedicated (or consecrated) to the sanctuary, a religious act in Leviticus corresponding in Acts to the laying of money at the apostles' feet.<sup>181</sup> The selling and consecration of a field was an extraordinary event, evidenced by the ruling made in Lev 27: 20-21 removing the

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<sup>177</sup> Neil, *Acts*, p. 94.

<sup>178</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 482-3.

<sup>179</sup> Cf. Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 339-340, who argues that the measurement is the produce of the field.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Derrett, *Ananias*, p. 228.

field from the redemption process. A dedicated field was, in reality, a long-term lease to the sanctuary, which would gain access to the land's yield.<sup>182</sup> It was to be redeemed by the owner by a fifth of the assessed value added to the original redemption price and paid to the sanctuary before the Jubilee. Otherwise, the land became the permanent property of the sanctuary.<sup>183</sup>

The exceptional circumstance of a dedicated field being sold to another Israelite (27:20) has become a bit of a *crux* for interpreters. The question is: how may one sell a piece of property that has been dedicated?<sup>184</sup> It has been suggested that if the owner first dedicated the field (giving the sanctuary rights to the produce) and then sold it to an unsuspecting farmer, he was guilty of a deception, or "sharp practice,"<sup>185</sup> and the penalty was the permanent loss of land. This solution is not without problems,<sup>186</sup> such as the lack of any indication in the text that something this devious has happened.<sup>187</sup>

Milgrom provides another interpretation, explaining what would occur if the land was sold (וַאֲמַכְרָה) first and then dedicated:

"It is Haran (1971) who, to my knowledge, is the first to suggest that the verb is a pluperfect: the owner of the land consecrated it *after having sold it*. In order to reclaim it, he would have to pay more than twice its value: repurchase it from the buyer and redeem it from the sanctuary. Thus it is clear from the outset, when he consecrated his sold property, he intended it as a permanent gift to the sanctuary. To this can be added an even more compelling argument: the sanctuary cannot benefit from the consecration, since the land is in the buyer's hands until the jubilee. Therefore, the owner's purpose in consecrating the land is that the sanctuary should take it over after the jubilee."<sup>188</sup> (italics his)

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<sup>182</sup> Levine, *Leviticus*, p. 176.

<sup>183</sup> Rooker, *Leviticus*, p. 326.

<sup>184</sup> Hartley, *Leviticus*, p. 483.

<sup>185</sup> Wenham, *Leviticus*, p. 340.

<sup>186</sup> See Budd, *Leviticus*, pp. 384-5.

<sup>187</sup> See Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, pp. 2383-2385 for an extended discussion.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid. p. 2385. For another explanation with the same conclusion, see W. Houston, 'Contrast in Tense and Exegesis. The Case of the Field Vowed and Sold, Lev. XXVII 20,' *Vetus Testamentum* 49.3 (1999) pp. 416-20.

Milgrom's careful work may illuminate the activity of Barnabas as first selling his land and then consecrating it by placing the proceeds at the apostles' feet.<sup>189</sup>

Barnabas' dedicated money was a parallel to the dedication of land in the OT passage.

The final lines of the passage in Lev 27 begin to pull it together with Acts 5.

In v. 21, the field does not become a devoted field (דָּחַן) *until the Jubilee*.<sup>190</sup>

Milgrom explains that the consecrated land became the property of the sanctuary and the priesthood at the Jubilee. Only then did it come under their control and it was then even called a דָּחַן , or permanent inherited possession<sup>191</sup> of the sanctuary. The transfer was accomplished at the Jubilee, and the field's status was then changed to דָּחַן, a devoted thing (Lev 27:21).

**In summary**, it is the idea of the dedicated thing becoming a devoted thing at the Jubilee that is relevant to Acts 5. An implication of understanding the resurrection and Pentecost to be the fulfilment of the Jubilee's two main themes is that the Jubilee has occurred in Christ—the new age is a Jubilee age. Therefore, when Barnabas dedicated the proceeds from his sale of a field, it did not need to wait to the Jubilee to become דָּחַן, it was immediately devoted.

This is how the Jubilee applies to Ananias and Sapphira, to whom we now turn. The moment Ananias took the money and laid it at the apostles' feet, he participated in a formal, legal act of transfer. There is no hint in Acts that anything less than the undivided proceeds could be dedicated—the implication of Acts 4:32-35

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<sup>189</sup> The international element may not be out of Luke's interest field at all, given his purpose of tracing the gospel "to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8), a path that first ran through Cyprus (13:4ff). Cf. Polhill, *Acts*, p. 155.

<sup>190</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, p. 2386.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

is that all the proceeds of property sales were given.<sup>192</sup> Only the entirety would suffice, because it would become devoted to the sacred realm. To withhold some of God's money was to take from the devoted things, an action punishable by death.

There are numerous intertextual allusions between the Jubilee legislation and Acts 4-5. There are similar topics, concepts and vocabulary that appear to portray Ananias and Sapphira's act as a dedication, parallel to that of Lev 27, which was immediately  $\square\Gamma\Gamma$  because Jesus fulfilled the Jubilee. Their punishment was that of stealing from devoted things.

### **Acts 5:1-11 as a Type-Scene:**

The concept of stealing devoted things is possibly the strongest allusion back to the OT, though not directly to the Jubilee. Devoted things were usually brought into the sphere of the sacred, devoted people were destroyed. Lev 27:28 states that devoted things were most holy to Yahweh and were beyond use to all but the sanctuary personnel.<sup>193</sup>

In the context of  $\square\Gamma\Gamma$  warfare at Jericho, Josh 6:18-19 contain instructions concerning devoted things:

“As for you, keep away from the things devoted to destruction, so as not to covet and take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel an object for destruction, bringing trouble on it. But all silver and gold, and vessels of bronze and iron, are sacred to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD.”

It was these regulations about the devoted things that Achan transgressed in Josh 7:1. He stole gold, silver, and a mantle that were devoted to Yahweh, just as the

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<sup>192</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 314, says that the context implies one hundred percent of the proceeds were given in these transactions. Cf. B. J. Capper, ‘The Interpretation of Acts 5.4,’ *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 19 (1983) pp. 117-131; Witherington, *Acts*, p. 207; H. Havelaar, ‘Hellenistic Parallels to Acts 5. 1-11 and the Problem of Conflicting Interpretations,’ *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 67 (1997) pp. 65-66.

<sup>193</sup> Milgrom, *Leviticus* 23-27, p. 2418.

devoted field of Lev 27 was.<sup>194</sup> The connection of devoted things is significant because Ananias's sin in Acts 5:2 is described by a word used only three places in the Greek Bible, νοσφιζω (to steal, rob, appropriate<sup>195</sup>), but it is the same word used to describe Achan's sin in the LXX. This "use of a rare Greek verb"<sup>196</sup> provides an important intertextual link to OT stories with motifs of Jubilee, dedication, and חֲרֻם.

Many Acts commentators have made note of the typological connection between Achan and Ananias.<sup>197</sup> However, there is no consensus about what that connection means, or if it is even a valid connection. It appears that the reason for the uncertainty is that the connection is perceived to depend a great deal on νοσφιζω.

Fitzmyer comments on the Achan-Acts connection:

Such Old Testament incidents provide a certain typology: if that could happen at the beginning of Israel's possession of the Promised Land, so something similar could come to pass at the beginning of the Christian community's existence. The trouble with such interpretations is that, save for the verb nosphizein, "misappropriate" ...there is little relation between the two accounts. Who is seeing the connection between them, Luke or the modern commentator?<sup>198</sup>

Marshall notes that there are further similarities between the stories, but not enough "...to show that one story was created on the pattern of the other," though he

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<sup>194</sup> See T. G. Crawford, 'Taking the Promised Land, Leaving the Promised Land: Luke's Use of Joshua for a Christian Foundation Story,' *Review and Expositor* 95.2 (1998) pp. 251-261.

<sup>195</sup> J. Lust, E. Eynikel, and K. Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Biblegesellschaft, 1996).

<sup>196</sup> Polhill, *Acts*, p. 156. It is evident from BAG (pp. 543-4) that νοσφιζω was a common, everyday word. However, in terms of intertextuality within the canon, it is strikingly uncommon. Its third biblical occurrence is Titus 2:10.

<sup>197</sup> Neil, *Acts*, p. 95; Witherington, *Acts*, p. 213; Bruce, *Acts*, p. 110; Rackham, *Acts*, p. 63; Polhill, *Acts*, p. 156; Williams, *Acts*, p. 88; Munck, *Acts*, p. 40; Longenecker, *Acts*, pp. 109-10; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 319; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 111; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 237; F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *The Acts of the Apostles* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1931) p. 43; F. Selter, 'χρημα,' in C. Brown (gen. ed.) *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: The Zondervan Corporation, 1976) 2:845-7. Hughes, *Acts*, p. 78; J. C. Macaulay, *Expository Commentary on Acts* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1946) p. 59.

<sup>198</sup> Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 319.

suspects some typological resemblance.<sup>199</sup> Bruce suggests, "...a study of the conscious or unconscious parallels between Joshua and Acts would be rewarding."<sup>200</sup>

Other commentators are more optimistic concerning the intertextual impact of νοσφιζω. Longenecker thinks that the word "...implies that Luke meant to draw a parallel between the sin of Achan as the Israelites began their conquest of Canaan and the sin of Ananias and Sapphira as the church began its mission."<sup>201</sup> Haenchen is even more optimistic:

This story seems an exact parallel of Achan's...like him, Ananias has misappropriated something which belongs to God (part of the promised money) and is punished by death for it.<sup>202</sup>

Within all these quotes lies a detection of a typological connection of some sort. Macauley develops this typological connection further, by linking the story of the Garden of Eden to those of Achan and Ananias.<sup>203</sup> He suggests that the sin common to all three stories is covetousness, and that there are some motif patterns, such as the immediate 'hiding' of the transgression and the sin's subsequent revealing.<sup>204</sup> Other commentators have noticed this Eden connection, although there is the same lack of consensus as with νοσφιζω.<sup>205</sup>

Macauley's interpretation is reminiscent of Alter's type-scene.<sup>206</sup> These three stories of Eden, Achan and Ananias do seem to follow a conventional motif pattern:

- 1) Each story occurs at the beginning of a new era in salvation history (creation/entry into the land/Pentecost).
- 2) The crisis of each story is the misappropriation of a forbidden item

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<sup>199</sup> Marshall, *Acts*, p.111.

<sup>200</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles: The Greek Text with Introduction and Commentary* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1979) p. 132.

<sup>201</sup> Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 110.

<sup>202</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 239.

<sup>203</sup> Macauley, *Acts*, p. 59. The title of his sermon is "The Ghost of Achan."

<sup>204</sup> Ibid, pp. 59-60.

<sup>205</sup> Rackham, *Acts*, p. 64; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 319 Cf. Derrett, *Ananias*, p. 229.

<sup>206</sup> See p. 32.

(fruit/devoted things/land sale proceeds).

- 3) The sin of taking from God and of covetousness is similar in each story.
- 4) Sin is immediately followed by deception (hiding in the bushes/burying the things in the ground/lying).
- 5) Deception is revealed under interrogation by the 'good' protagonist (Yahweh/Joshua/Peter).
- 6) Judgement is passed upon the revelation of sin.
- 7) The death sentence is applied in each story.
- 8) Each story is explicitly interpreted in the Bible to apply to a corporate group of people. (See Fig. 5.1 below for a graphic display of this pattern).

Alter suggests that changes to the conventional motif pattern of the type-scene allow the stories to fit into their respective contexts. These “significant innovations” are helpful clues for the meaning of the story.<sup>207</sup> There are a number of adapted motifs within these three stories. For example, the role played by Yahweh in Eden is played by two men, Joshua and Peter, in the following stories. In the first story, Yahweh asks questions to discover the sin, in the following stories, Yahweh informs Joshua and (presumably) Peter of the presence of sin, which they do not know about, and then they ask questions.<sup>208</sup> These characters all function as examiner, judge and executioner in their respective stories. Perhaps this typology may explain the perceived harshness of Peter’s actions.<sup>209</sup>

The nature of the sin between Eden and Achan is exact: in Gen 3:6 and Josh 7:21, both Eve and Achan saw (ראו), coveted (חמד), and took (לקח). The sin

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<sup>207</sup> Alter, *Narrative*, p. 62.

<sup>208</sup> Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 237, n. 4, claims this hiddenness is part of the force of νοσφιζω. See F. J. Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, p. 42; Polhill, *Acts*, p. 157; Marshall, *Acts*, p. 110; Haenchen, *Acts*, p. 240; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 317; J. Munck, *The Acts of the Apostles* (New York, Doubleday and Company, 1967) p. 42; Witherington, *Acts*, p. 215-6.

<sup>209</sup> See Foakes-Jackson, *Acts*, p. 42; Longenecker, *Acts*, p. 110; Neil, *Acts*, p. 94; Bruce, *Acts*, pp. 111-2; Fitzmyer, *Acts*, p. 317.

**Fig. 5.1: Analysis of Acts 5:1-11 as a Type-Scene with Genesis 1-3 and Joshua 7**

<b>Type-Scene Motif:</b>	<b>Genesis 1-3: Adam and Eve in the Garden</b>	<b>Joshua 7: Achan after Jericho's Fall</b>	<b>Acts 5:1-11: Ananias and Sapphira</b>
<b>Setting of a New Beginning:</b>	Creation of the world and the seventh day of rest	The initial victory of the conquest after entering the Promised Land	After the giving of the Spirit and the initial restoration of the kingdom
<b>Misappropriation of a Forbidden Object:</b>	Taking of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil	Taking of the Mex spoil of the devoted city of Jericho	Holding back from land proceeds that were devoted to God
<b>Sinful Act:</b>	Saw, desired, took (3: 6)	Saw, coveted, took (7: 21)	Lied to Spirit, kept money (5:3)
<b>Hiding/Deception on the Part of the Sinners:</b>	"Hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden." (3:8)	Hid the gold, silver, and mantle from Shinar in the ground under his tent (7:21)	Husband and wife conspired in their hearts and lied to God (5: 4, 9)
<b>Revealing of the Secret Upon Questioning:</b>	Yahweh questions Adam and Eve (3: 9-13)	Joshua questions Achan (7:19)	Peter questions Ananias and Sapphira separately (5: 3, 8)
<b>Pronouncement of God's Judgment:</b>	Curses Announced (3: 14-19)	Joshua displays the devoted things and proclaims God's 'trouble' (7: 22-25)	Peter Rebukes Ananias and Sapphira for their lying to God (5: 4, 9)
<b>Judgment of Death:</b>	Removal of Access to God as metaphorical (i.e. spiritual) death (3: 23)	Literal Death by Stoning (7: 25)	Literal Death by Peter's pronouncement (5: 5, 10)
<b>Interpretation of the Corporate Impact of the Sin:</b>	Sin of one man brought death to all (Rom 5:12)	Sin made the entire people 'devoted to destruction' (7:12)	Great fear seizes church (5:11) (first use of ekklhsia in Acts) (5:11)



between Achan and Ananias is less precise, but in addition to the connection of νοσφιζω, resemblances can be seen in the list Yahweh gave to Joshua in Josh 7:11:

Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I imposed on them. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have acted deceitfully, and they have put them among their own belongings. (Josh 7:11)

Both men lied to God (שָׁחַד cf. Acts 5:3) and both took from the devoted things and held them back for their own use (cf. Acts 5:2). This activity can be regarded as stealing from God.

The other sin involved in Josh 7:11 is the transgressing of the covenant. And in Acts 5:9, the testing (πειραζω) of the Holy Spirit. Though these two sins appear dissimilar at first, they are analogous. In Num 14:18-22, the idea of testing is said to be a breach of the covenant. In this passage, πειραζω is presented as the essence of covenant transgression:

...none of the people who have seen my glory and the signs that I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have tested (επειρασαν) these ten times and have not obeyed my voice, shall see the land that I swore to give their ancestors; none of those who despised me shall see it.

Thus, the sin of Achan, Ananias and Sapphira may be seen examples of a covenant breaking ‘testing’ of the deity. This sin always seems to be the same—it involves a denial of what God has said or promised in favour of one’s own plans. Whether in the Garden, Jericho, or the dawn of the new age in Acts, this sin brings severe consequences. For Achan and Ananias and Sapphira, their specific sin was further nuanced by the matter of חֶרֶם.

**In summary of the social and economic angles,** the argument suggests that Barnabas the Levite sold a piece of property he owned. Legal questions of land tenure, distinct vocabulary, allusions, and the storyline itself reflect back to Lev 27.

That passage deals with the sale and subsequent dedication of a field to the sanctuary, with the field's  $\square\Gamma\Gamma$  status becoming effective at the Jubilee.

In Lev 27, the sold and dedicated field remained in the possession of the buyer until the Jubilee, at which point it passed irrevocably into the hands of the sanctuary/priests. The connection between this transfer of property and the story in Acts 5 is the threefold repetition of selling and laying the money at the apostles' feet.

But Barnabas and the others who sold land, did not bring real estate to the apostles, they brought money. The connection with Lev 27 and the Jubilee could easily be missed because money would pass immediately into the control of the apostles without making any connections to the jubiliary status of  $\square\Gamma\Gamma$ . Dedicated money would be indistinguishable from any other offering.

The rare biblical verb νοσφιζω from the story of Achan prevents this from happening. It signals that these particular donations (the dedicating of proceeds from property sales) have a special designation. The money was a devoted thing, like the things of Achan—and the status of a dedicated field at the Jubilee. When presented to the apostles, in a dedication parallel to Lev 27, the money was immediately devoted, because the Jubilee had arrived!<sup>210</sup>

The point of this section is that these connections imply that the early church lived in a time of Jubilee fulfilment begun at the resurrection and Pentecost. Ananias tragically discovered, and Sapphira shortly thereafter, that because Jesus fulfilled and embodies the Jubilee, his community (called an  $\epsilon\kappa\kappa\lambda\eta\sigma\iota\alpha$  here for the first time in Acts) also lived in eighth-day/Jubilee fulfilment and thus, their dedicated money instantly became  $\square\Gamma\Gamma$ —they had lied to and stolen from God, in the pattern of

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<sup>210</sup> Another possibility is that Acts 5 happened to occur in a Jubilee year.

Achan.<sup>211</sup> Both type and anti-type suffered divine execution, as they brought grave evil into an incipient era of salvation-history.

It is the sin and consequence within the type-scene of a new salvation history setting that provides an application to biblical ethics. The new age of Jubilee fulfilment in Jesus Christ was marred by Ananias and Sapphira, an Adam and Eve type who stole devoted money from God. Just as Achan's sin signalled that a new era awaited final redemption, so the sin in Acts 5 shows that, even after the resurrection, salvation history is still moving forward. The Jubilee's influence on the biblical story, and its instruction to follow the ethics of 'covenantal brotherhood' is not yet complete. The type-scene makes us aware that there is (figuratively) one more Jubilee cycle to be run before the end of it all.

Thus, the ethics for covenant brothers that began in Lev 25 as a response to the redemption and promised restoration of Yahweh found their fulfilment in Christ. However, those ethics are not over, they continue on in the early church, in the same response to the same redemption and promise of restoration. And those ethics are still the response required from the Christian today—until the Jubilee is finally fulfilled.

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<sup>211</sup> Cf. C. L. Blomberg, *Neither Poverty nor Riches* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999) p 166.

## **Theological Conclusions**

Several conclusions have emerged in this paper in the course of examining the Jubilee as a test case for an OT ethics methodology. There are many people with their own presuppositions and methods who read the Bible for their own other reasons,<sup>1</sup> which can be very helpful. The express purpose of this investigation, however, was to find a method that would enable OT ethics to be responsibly appropriated by Christians. The conclusions concerning methodology are considered below, followed by some conclusions on the Jubilee.

### **Methodology:**

#### **1. The Importance of the Meta-narrative:**

Using the grand story of the Bible as an organising principle has significantly influenced the results of this study. Three points can be stressed here.

**First**, the meta-narrative demands that the interpreter acknowledge that there is a greater entity than the individual text lying open before him/her. After all the exegetical work on the text has been finished, it still remains for the interpreter to locate the text into the meta-narrative, with a prior task of locating the text within its covenant. As important as an individual text is, the meta-narrative requires that the text be interpreted as part of the ongoing story of redemption—a story modern Christians inhabit. This facet of importance is seen in the three-tiered approach to scripture.

**Second**, the meta-narrative provides unity to the vast diversity of texts that make up the Bible. Each text finds its meaning in the storyline, and it is not necessary to force an artificial unity on genres, history, or themes, because they can remain divergent materials all speaking to one story. Bible-wide themes can be traced,

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<sup>1</sup> R. W. L. Moberly, *The Old Testament of the Old Testament: Patriarchal Narratives and Mosaic Yahwism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992) p. 6.

developed, and used without being forced into the role of organising principle, as one would find in systematic theology.

**Third**, the meta-narrative is suited for Wright's paradigm method. To even speak of Israel as a paradigm is to suggest that Israel is a paradigm for something else—Israel relates to and informs the modern faith community. This inherent aspect of a paradigm is fitting with typology because of typology's historical nature and its ability to produce unity between the Testaments. The society of Israel, the events and the people of the OT are all pictures, or types, which ultimately point to Christ, but without creating artificial unity among the manifold types of the OT.

The meta-narrative provides a measure of constraint against the abuse of typology and intertextuality. There are a myriad of intertextual connections that cannot be developed as persuasive influences on interpretation. Indeed, that is the chief danger with typology and intertexts: along with a wealth of interpretive suggestions that may be profitable (e.g. Achan and Ananias) come a myriad of rabbit trails. The constant interchange between Christian interpreters from within the meta-narrative is the way to discern one from the other.

## **2. Minor Adaptations to Wright's Method:**

These alterations were addressed at the end of chapter four and so only a brief summary is required. The **first** change is that the triangle method needs to be done from the perspective of the theological angle. As stated previously, Wright understands this need and advocates it, though his voluminous knowledge of Israel's social structure sometimes distracts him. Wright points out that Israel's society existed to embody God's revelation and the logical extension of that point is that the social angle exists to explicate the theological.

When the theological angle takes precedence, some of the details of the social and economic angles can be reinterpreted. The return to Eden theme and the emphasis on brotherhood serve as examples. However, the danger in what I am arguing for is what Barr is so concerned about—the history and the grounding of the OT story in reality can become compromised and even lost as theological truth is elevated. The best defence against this danger is a properly aligned usage of the historical critical method.

The **second** change to Wright's method is that a topic studied from within the paradigm of Israel needs to be related to the over-arching biblical-theological themes that are also in the passage being studied. These themes begin the process of moving the meaning of the text towards the meta-narrative. Again, special care must be paid to detect how a theme is developed intertextually and resignified through the meta-narrative.

**Third**, the most significant change to an OT topic comes at the point when it moves into the NT. The chief question, then, is how Jesus fulfills the topic and what he does with it, since he is the subject of the meta-narrative. For this reason, Wright's paradigmatic interpretation was rejected, as it sought an application for the text outside of Christ. In a sense, Christ is the narrow midpoint of an hourglass through which all the sands of OT imagery must pass in order to find fulfilment.

In conclusion, these alterations, once applied to Wright's triangle method, combine with the meta-narrative and the three-tiered approach to make a comprehensive method by which to understand an OT topic ethically, bring it through Christ, and apply it to modern Christians.

### **The Jubilee:**

Interpreting the Jubilee as part of a type-scene with a five-fold motif structure, significantly developed the Jubilee's role in the meta-narrative. In being connected to the great redemption event of the Exodus and Sinai, and the great land restoration event of the entry into the Promised Land, the Jubilee contributes to the fulfilment of those themes in the NT—in a fulfilment type-scene. The type-scene helps locate the Jubilee into a prominent theological place in the meta-narrative, even if historically it is not a frequent presence.

The most pronounced ethical injunction in Lev 25 is the prescribed behaviour of one Israelite brother to another. While Wright has done a masterful job of analysing the tribe, clan and father's house, it appears to me that the real ethical interplay of the Jubilee takes place on the plane of the **ḥesed**, the brother helping his Israelite brother. The care and concern addressed in the chapter, while expressed in predominantly economic terms, would have effectively encompassed every aspect of life. The Israelites were indeed to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev 19:18) by establishing each other in their proper relationship with Yahweh (by redeeming a brother's land or freeing him from slavery). The Jubilee was a profoundly covenantal institution—incumbent only upon Israelites.

All three angles of Wright's ethical triangle are apparent in this view of the Jubilee: a brotherly love that is expressed within the covenant community (social angle) in the economic matters of food, land, slavery, debt, interest, etc. (the economic angle), is intimately instrumental in establishing the Israelite's relationship with Yahweh (the theological angle).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See p. 9.



The Jubilee retains its ethical authority because its response to the type of Exodus redemption is parallel to the response of the early church to the antitype of Christ's redemption. The Jubilee is 'fills out' the parallel story in Acts with its ethical imagery, forcing us to recognise that Acts 4-5 is a mirror of the intent of the Jubilee laws—it is not simply descriptive of the early church but, because of the Jubilee, it is prescriptive for the behaviour of God's people. In a sense, the Jubilee is an intertext of Acts 4-5 and it serves to continue the storyline by adding continuity and content to the passage in Acts.

Yahweh desires for the members of his community to have a material responsibility for each other. The emphasis on brothers in Lev 25 and the community in Acts 4-5 speaks towards this ethic of the community to help each other with physical needs—we cannot be the community of faith if we deny this very material responsibility. Just as the Israelites helped a brother towards the restoration of the Jubilee, so the early church helped each other while awaiting the next encounter with the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

The Jubilee ethic for Israel and for the early church is a communal ethic. It describes how the people of God are to act in God's world. There is a physical task of caring for each other's needs, but it flows from a theological motivation. The early church passage adds an element not seen in the Jubilee passage: the community must be about the proclamation of their redemption—the resurrection (Acts 4:33).

But within that communal ethic there is a profound individual injunction. The task of making the OT community what Yahweh instructed it to be fell upon the shoulders of a common, unnamed Israelite who, out of obedience, was to take it upon himself to ensure his brother was cared for, and that his brother's covenantal status

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<sup>3</sup> His next approach, described in Rev 19, bears a frightening resemblance to his appearance at the conquering of Jericho.

suffered no ill effects. This task would almost certainly be to his financial detriment. These same emphases are seen in Acts 4 when unnamed people sold their property to ensure the welfare of other community members.

In looking at the early church and how they functioned after the jubiliary event of Pentecost (by taking care of each other's physical needs and doing gospel-oriented proclamation), it becomes evident that we modern Christians must give up something: either we give up our wealth, be it land or money, for the sake of the new community and its ministry, or we relinquish the great power and great grace (4:33), the great fear (5:11) and the great salvation (2:47) that characterises God's people when they function according to Jubilee principles.

The Jubilee is, at once, a communal and individual ethic, aimed at producing a community built up by a brotherly love expressed by those individuals of the covenant community who are committed to the task of having the Lord's people function as they have been instructed from the time of Sinai until today.

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